

CATCHING WILD GEESE By Peter Scott

APR 15 1948

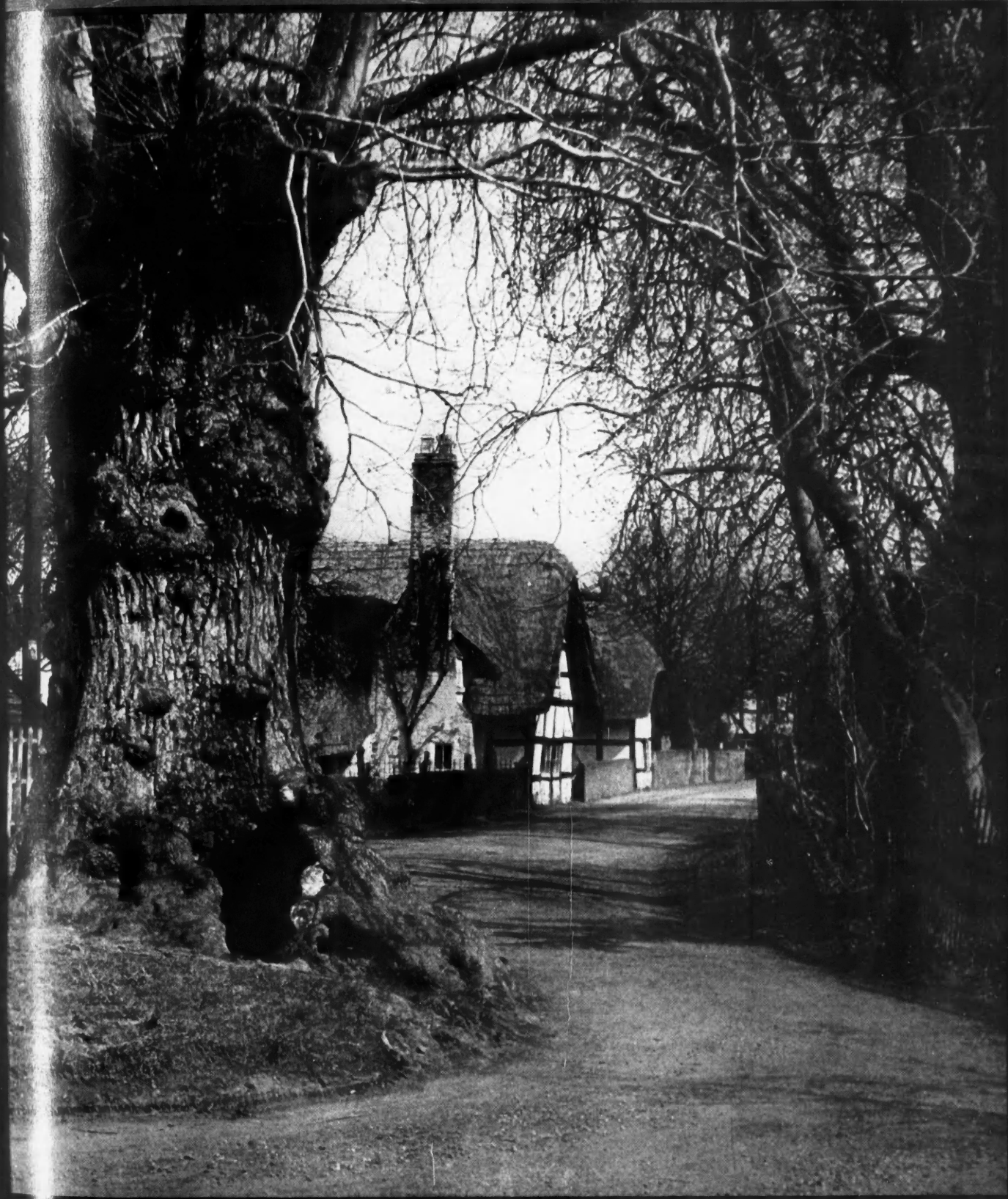
COUNTRY LIFE

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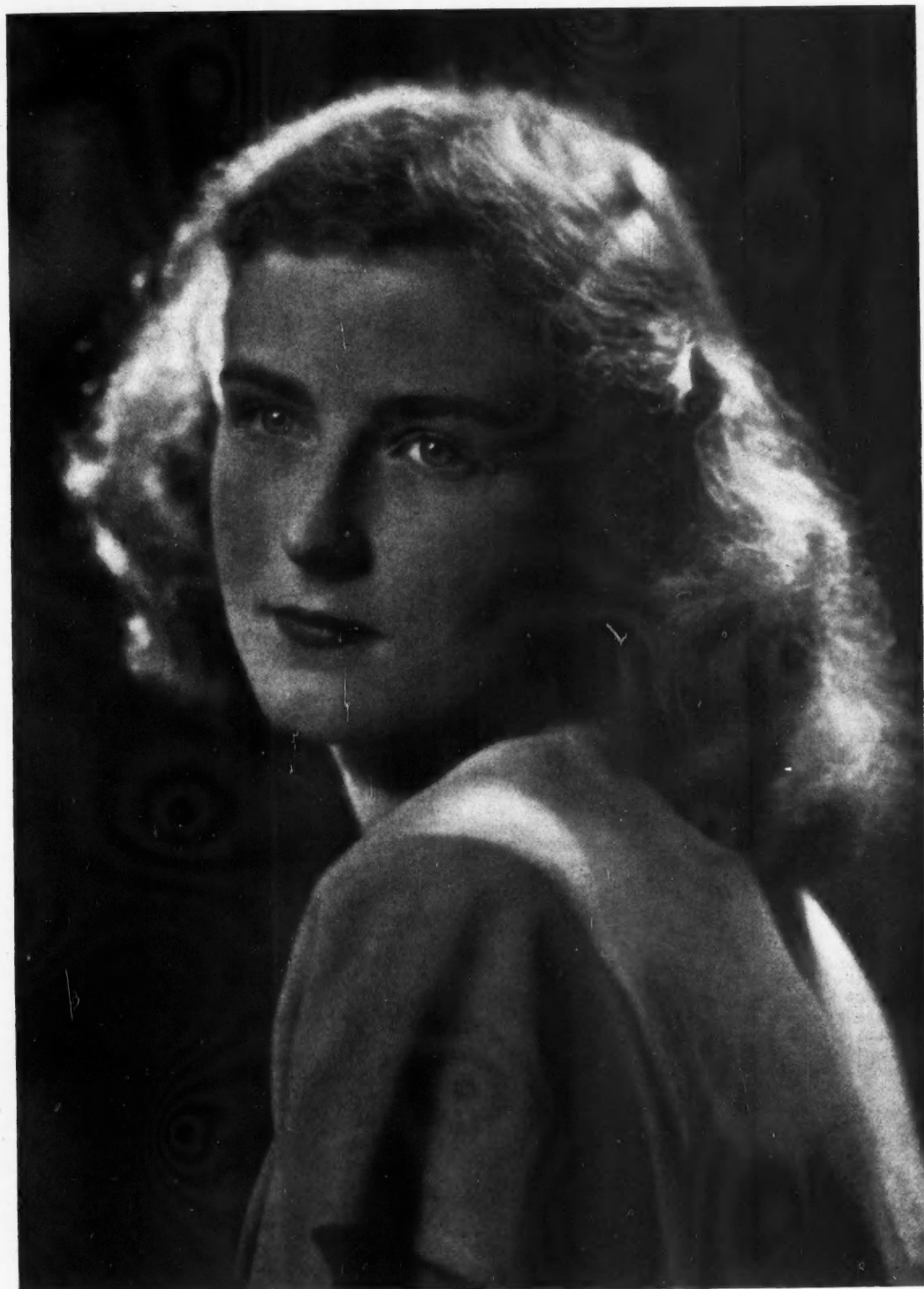
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ADVERTISING PAGE 662

COUNTRY LIFE

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APRIL 2, 1948



Pearl Freeman

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Miss Patricia Buller is the daughter of Admiral Sir Henry Buller and Lady Hermione Buller

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THE COLONIAL CONTRIBUTION

THE post-war suggestion that now is the time to "step up" the primary production of the British dependencies so that they may contribute more effectively to the needs of the United Kingdom and the world, attractive as it sounds, demands a careful approach. The Colonial contribution to world supplies and raw materials is already substantial, and was increased during the war by a production drive which still continues to aim at maximum yield in conditions no longer so easy to control. If it is to be increased, the present shortage of basic capital equipment and labour must be met, and existing social and political obstacles overcome. "People sometimes talk," says the recent Report of the Colonial Primary Products Committee, "as if, in a matter of months, the Colonies could be made to flow with milk and honey. There are great possibilities, but it will take time to bring them to fruition." The Committee attributes such wishful thinking to the dramatic imagination of the Press in its comments on the economic and financial crisis, but Ministers themselves cannot be absolved from the charge of spreading the view that by the introduction of new capital, new techniques and new incentives, a change in the pattern of Colonial agriculture can be brought about almost overnight.

There is no need, however, to be pessimistic. Colonial development should be viewed not merely as a measure to meet the immediate dollar emergency, but as a long-term contribution to the stability of the sterling area and to the reconstruction of Europe. If properly handled it will reduce dependence upon foodstuffs and raw materials from the Western Hemisphere sufficiently to allow Europe to meet once more its dollar needs from its current earnings.

So far the Committee has considered the prospects of increasing the output of several groups of Colonial products. Little hope is entertained of dramatic developments in establishing a Colonial meat export trade on a scale comparable with that of the Dominions. Rinderpest is at present an insuperable obstacle to the development of a trade in carcass beef between Africa and this country. The virus can be carried in the frozen carcass; British cattle have no resistance to the disease, and might be exterminated if it gained a footing here. On the other hand, the prospects of a market in the United Kingdom for frozen carcasses and tinned pig products are good. The Committee believes that there are possibilities of an extension of the Kenyan and Jamaican dairy industries, and of the development of new dairying areas in Northern Rhodesia. The prospect of a dried egg trade from the Colonies needs careful examination in the light of the capital cost. An organisation was set up in Kenya to supply the Services with quality eggs during the war, and if it were revived surpluses might well arise for export to

the United Kingdom. It is interesting to hear that the Committee have been informed that "the shortage of oranges and grapefruit is more apparent than real." On currency grounds they think that an increase in Colonial production may be useful, though they do not attempt to estimate the future trends of consumption, which will be influenced by such factors as prices, wage levels and the availability of other fruits. The production of "welfare" concentrate which formerly came from the United States is now being developed by the Ministry of Food in Palestine and Jamaica. As regards cereals, rice is unhesitatingly recommended for maximum expansion. Expanded Colonial production may not, it is said, produce rice for export, but it will reduce dependence on dollar sources of supply.

BE GENTLE, SPRING!

COME, slowly, Spring!
And spare your kisses from the tender mouth
Of the sweet south
Whose every warmer breath must bring
Another flower,
Lest cold comes snapping with the brittle blow
Of frost, and snow
Seems white and strange,
Choking the earth, sounding the muffled knell
Of change.
And hold back, Spring,
Your tight brown buds and bright enamelled wing!
Lest you uncover
Not only violets and daffodils
And soft green slopes below the frigid hills,
But the defenceless heart
Of some unhappy lover
Who walks apart
Crushing your primroses with careless heel
In anguish, for he cannot feel
Nor anywhere discover
The lodestar round which all his senses reel.
Beware, you whirling thing,
Fevered with growing,
Throwing your bright ring
Around the earth!
Someone is here who cannot touch the Spring
For none can touch alone,
And nothing from a single stem is grown.
Life has no pity for a lonely heart
When all things growing are a blended part
Of every perfect thing.
Then, for you will not wait for any man,
Nor bear his weary burdens as you run
With arm: outstretched to the advancing sun,
Be gentle, eager Spring!

PHOEBE HESKETH.

TREES AS SCREENS

THE news that Edinburgh University Forestry Department has recently supplied 1,000 conifers for "the first Scottish experiments in the planting of trees to beautify derelict pit-heaps" may well have caused one or two eyebrows to rise. In England experiments of this kind began several years ago, as an article on the Black Country in COUNTRY LIFE of August, 11, 1944, indicated. The writer mentioned "a plantation near Bilston where 160,000 trees were planted. After 20 years the growth has been very satisfactory and the percentage of deaths extremely small; . . . The varieties included alder, black poplar, sycamore, ash and horse chestnut." But far too little of this good work has been done. Incidentally, it provides foresters with an opportunity (at a time when there is some popular bias against economic forestry) of winning goodwill by showing what they can do with trees, when timber is not the first consideration. Certainly there is plenty of scope, horrors enough (spoil heaps and rubbish tips of all kinds, ugly buildings, old gravel pits, open-cast mines) which might be decently veiled. Two or three points of detail may, perhaps, be mentioned. Since poverty of the soil is a common difficulty, it might be recalled that soil-improving pioneer species include not only the broad-leaved trees already mentioned, but also birch, willow and rowan, and a mixture of broad-leaved and coniferous trees would seem particularly suitable in most places. Since there is a serious shortage of trees at present, it may be worth adding that the form of individual trees is not of prime importance for this kind of work, and the re-

jected culls of forest nurseries might provide most of the necessary stocks. Lastly, since young plantations in urban areas often suffer damage by schoolchildren, it is a wise precaution to associate the local schools with the work of planting and tending—in short, to exploit the poachers-make-good-gamekeepers principle.

FARM APPRENTICES

THE Government scheme for the agricultural training of ex-Service men and women whose careers on the farm had been "interrupted" by the war—in the sense either that they had already started work on a farm or would have done so in due course—obviously could apply only to one generation of entrants, which by now must be largely exhausted, at any rate so far as their need of elementary practical training is concerned. At the time the scheme was set in motion it was pointed out that something on the same lines, some plan by which young people could be provided with practical training while being paid for their work, and at the same time receive the advantage of theoretical instruction either at the Farm Institutes or in special classes, was a permanent need if recruitment of the right sort of entrant to agriculture were to be maintained, and those recruits were to be suitably trained for advancement in the career they had chosen. It is now announced that the National Farmers' Union are discussing with the two Unions of farm-workers the terms of a modern apprenticeship scheme on the lines indicated, and that they are already agreed in principle. As is well known, the Government's training scheme did not achieve all that was expected of it—the difficulties of supplying adequate training to mature recruits when the basis of the training is continuous and sometimes irksome work are not insignificant, and those who at a distance feel a strong attraction towards work on the land are often found to change their mind at nearer quarters. But an apprenticeship system run on modern lines is just what is required to attract the right recruits at the right age.

AFTER SEVENTY-TWO YEARS

THE beating of M. J. Brooks's high-jump record in the University Sports is an event to arouse mixed feelings. Everyone will congratulate the Cambridge President, I. Vind, a splendid athlete, on his achievement, but a few sentimental regrets there must be. Seventy-two years is a long time for a record to endure. Perhaps it might not have lasted quite so long if it were not that the weather at the time of the sports is often so cold and inimical to records, but the fact remains that it did. The standard of high jumping has changed out of knowledge since Brooks's day, for it must be remembered that he was the first man ever to clear six feet, and that the performance was on a priori grounds deemed incredible. When Tom Cribb beat Molineaux in their second fight it was declared that he need fight no more, and should be called Champion for the rest of his life. All things come to an end, and Brooks's jump has now been beaten, but it is entitled to a similar immortality.

THE DROPPED GOAL

OBVIOUSLY the Rugby authorities ought to know best and the outsider should criticise them, if at all, with due humility. Nevertheless a good many people who are fond of the game will "murmur a little sadly" at the new rule whereby the value of a dropped goal is next season to be reduced from four points to three. Presumably it is thought wrong that it should be worth more than a try, and no doubt the scoring of a try is the first object of the game. But the dropping of goals is a difficult and even a beautiful art in which a few players have specialised, greatly to the advantage of their sides. Moreover, he who drops for goal takes a risk: if he succeeds he is a hero; if he fails he has enabled the defending side to relieve the pressure, and is treated with obloquy. The taking of risks is a good feature in any game, and, it may be argued, deserves encouragement. The loss of that vital point will in this case rather discourage it. What a change since the ancient days when a goal was worth more than any number of tries! Tom Hughes, the *sacer* of the game, must turn in his grave.



IN A WESTMORLAND LANE

J. Hardman

A COUNTRYMAN'S NOTES

By
Major C. S. JARVIS

AN entomological irregularity of last autumn was that the brimstone butterflies, instead of beginning their hibernation at the end of July, as is their normal custom, stayed out until the end of September, having a really riotous time on the late autumn flowers and enjoying the unusual heat. Seeing what a rare occurrence it is to experience two months of unbroken sun and warmth in the late summer, one can hardly blame them for taking liberties with their self-imposed laws, even though it did upset all entomological traditions. Inasmuch as they had denied themselves two months' sleep, one might have expected them to get up late the following spring, but nothing of the sort. On the first warm and sunny day in very early March every brimstone alarm clock in this part of the country went off at the same moment, and at about 11.30 a.m., when the sun had really begun to warm the air, the garden and surrounding lanes were being brightened almost without interruption by the passage of one of these brilliant yellow butterflies. "Passage," by the way, is the correct word to use in this connection, for the brimstone in spring has no time to tarry by the wayside—he has a matrimonial date somewhere down the woodland glade and is apparently always late for it.

The brimstone is in some ways the most important of all our butterflies, since he is always the first to appear after the winter, invariably beating the other recognised harbingers of spring, the orange-tip, by a month or more and his colouring is so very vivid and

distinctive and suggestive of brighter things to come.

He must have an extraordinarily good eye for a really snug and clean corner in which to spend the cold and damp winter months, for, when he sallies forth on the first day of spring, he is so very spick and span and so perfectly turned out. If by chance a hibernating comma, peacock or small tortoiseshell should come out to take advantage of the sun at the same time as the brimstone, one realises that other varieties do not stand the winter sleep nearly so well as he does, for their wings are usually a trifle frayed at the edges, their colouring dull and their general behaviour suggestive of the morning after the night before.

This spring, seeing that the brimstones had over-stayed their passes in the late summer of 1947 and subjected their clothing to two months' additional wear, I expected to see them looking a trifle part-worn and shabby. I am glad to say that I was quite wrong, since they looked bigger, brighter and more prosperous than usual—unless this was because they represent one of the very few bright spots in a shabby world.

* * *

ANOTHER feature of the first warm days of spring was the general disturbance caused in the garden, and its surrounding orchard and

wood, by the blackbirds trying to settle their partition question, which, like the other current partition question, has been going on for a very long time, and which appears to be quite as insoluble.

Throughout the winter the house blackbird, who thinks he has established rights on the area that includes the lawn and the birds' breakfast-table, has been riding off another cock, who has his established rights by the chicks' run, from which he draws his rations; but the riding-off demonstration, which previously lasted for a few minutes every morning, is now carried out with far more vigour and has to be done several times a day. When the tenant of the lawn thinks he has satisfactorily defined the frontier to be respected by the chicken-run intruder he finds to his annoyance that the orchard blackbird is also behaving in the same Guatemalan fashion and has crossed the southern boundary of the preserve. By the time this trespasser has been seen off by the same process of hopping with exaggerated vigour along the boundary line, the first aggressor is back again on the lawn and behaving in a more belligerent manner than ever. For an hour or more in the early morning and evening the birds concerned in the dispute sit on branches and argue the matter at great length, but with this side of the frontier disagreement I have no fault to find, since a blackbird's discussion on partition and frontier matters, unlike that of the United Nations, is well worth listening to.

CATCHING WILD GEESE

By PETER SCOTT

THE world's stock of migratory waterfowl is decreasing at a rate which is in some cases alarming. Steps are urgently needed to help ducks and geese in their struggle for existence against the spread of civilisation. But the problem is to know where and when and how to give this help. To know this one must know more about the birds; and one of the ways of learning about them (of discovering their average length of life, their migration routes and the details of their local movements) is by ringing.

The marking of birds by means of a small aluminium ring, with a number on it and an address to which the finder is asked to send details of its recovery, has already produced very interesting results, but more information is still required, particularly about those birds which have not been ringed in any great quantity.

The Severn Wildfowl Trust, in co-operation with the International Wildfowl Inquiry Committee, has for two seasons been ringing ducks caught in its own decoy pool beside the Severn Estuary. It has recently turned its attention to the ringing of the winter flocks of migratory wild geese, a task which has never before been successfully undertaken in this country. The attempts, apart from the scientific interest of their object, have proved a most entertaining and exciting, if expensive, sporting venture, for the wild geese must be caught in nets, and the development of these engines calls for a high degree of invention and ingenuity.

We have never been able to settle who thought of it first. We had tried with only moderate success to catch geese with a net propelled by springs. An account of it appeared in *COUNTRY LIFE* of February 4 and May 27, 1933. But we had found that the springs did not propel the net far enough. We thought that rockets would propel it farther. And so, on a sunny summer day we carried out our first tests and found that a net could be thrown to cover an area 25 yards square. We believed that if the net were carefully furled in a suitable place frequented by the geese, and the rockets were fired electrically with a line of flex leading to a hide, we should have some chance of success.

The first opportunity to try the net in practice came many months later, when the winter flocks of White-fronted Geese were assembled on the Severn Estuary. At the beginning of 1948 the flocks were rather smaller than usual; and when the attempt came to be made, only about 1,300 geese were feeding in the area, most of them in the wheat-fields lying to the east and the north-east of the saltings (known as the Dumbles) which are their most usual feeding-ground.



1.—THE AUTHOR WITH TWO OF THE ROCKETS DEvised FOR THROWING THE NET TO CATCH THE GEESE

On the morning before the attempt, we sat on top of a straw stack and watched the flight of the geese in from the estuary. They went in to a group of fields of not more than 15 acres each, and we felt that there was a good chance for the net if it were set in one of these. During the afternoon this net, which had repeatedly been dyed in order to get it the right colour to match a field of young wheat, was thrown a couple of times experimentally. On each occasion a very indifferent throw resulted, as the meshes were caught by the stalks and stems of the coarse grass in which we had set it. Whereas in the summer, the little 1-lb. rockets had pulled it over the full 25 yards, on neither of these throws was more than 10 yards of the centre of the net carried over, and only half the area was covered.

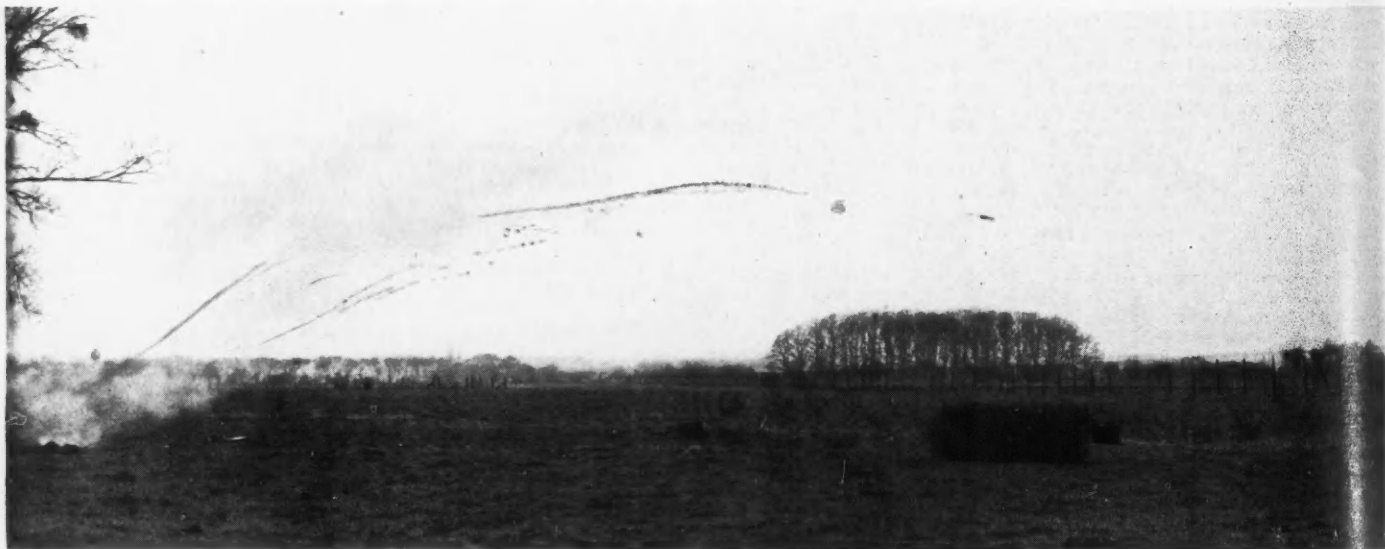
Later in the afternoon I made a reconnaissance of the feeding-grounds with Keith Shackleton, the bird painter. The geese were no longer to be found in the three small fields into which they had flown at dawn. We came upon them at last round the edges of a 100-acre field

about a mile farther on. Here, however, the wheat in the centre of the field had been grazed almost bare, and they had congregated in a thick swathe along two edges of the field. One of these edges was formed by a barbed wire fence and the other by a shallow flash of water, no more than a few yards wide. Along the top of the slope leading up from the flash the geese were sitting most thickly; indeed, neither of us could remember having seen White-fronts more tightly packed.

We flushed them gently from the field, and walked over to examine the area and select the most suitable spot on which to set the net in the darkness before the morrow's dawn. In view of the north-east wind, we thought that it should lie along the drills of the wheat at the edge of the field where the shoots were longer because the geese had not grazed there so much. Then we explored the nearest available cover for concealing the netters. This seemed to be an old disused sea wall some 100 yards away across the flash and along the barbed wire fence. All this decided, we returned in the dusk feeling that our chances were reasonably good.

That night great preparations were made. Mr. Schermuly, who makes the rockets we were using and who had come to help us at our first attempt, overhauled his wiring; Mr. Harris, a *COUNTRY LIFE* staff photographer, checked a telephoto lens; and the rest of us made lists of the objects which must, on no account, be forgotten on the morrow: the net, the rockets, the cartridges, the battery, a pressure hurricane lamp and torches for setting the net in the dark, the rings for ringing the geese, sacks for setting up on sticks in the small fields in which we did not want the geese to alight, the portable hide (big enough to conceal half a dozen of us on the old sea wall), pliers for crimping on the rings, a pencil and notebook for writing down their numbers, spare string, sandwiches and a spade.

We rose at four and set off in two parties, one by car with the heavy gear to go round to a bridge which was less than half a mile from the selected spot. The other party was to walk the mile and a half, planting the "scare geese" in the small fields on the way. I was not very familiar with the exact route from the bridge to our part of the 100-acre field, so with our various hurricane lamps and torches we started on the right bearing by the stars. This led us across a number of awkward ditches, but they were successfully negotiated and soon after 5.15 a.m., we joined the other party on the old sea wall, and went out together, all seven of us, like a party of smugglers or body-snatchers, across the flash at its lowest crossable point, and down the edge of the wheat to the corner of the fence.



2.—AN EARLY TEST: THE ROCKETS, FIRED BY ELECTRICITY, SHOOT OUT OVER A FIELD, CARRYING THE NET WITH THEM



3.—THE SCHEME IN OPERATION: AT THE FIRING OF THE ROCKETS THE GEESE ALL ROSE INTO THE AIR WITH A COMBINED ROAR OF WINGS AND VOICES

There we laid out all the equipment we had brought in a small heap so that nothing should be overlooked and left to frighten the geese when daylight came.

The patch we had chosen for the net was about ten yards from the fence, and, like the rest of the field, it was covered with small lumps of clay which were frozen solid. We found as we laid the net that the meshes caught frequently on these little lumps and were held firm and immovable. The chances that the net could fly out freely, however carefully we folded it, seemed very small. But having got up at four and being on the spot, we felt that the best we could do was to lay it carefully and hope for the best. So we laid it carefully, seven of us in a row, with the hurricane lamp hanging on the handle of the nice little ferreting spade.

As soon as the net had been furled the party divided: some went off to fetch the portable hide which had been left beside the car, some stayed behind to set out the rockets and lay the firing wires. It was getting late. Already the eastern sky was bright and we knew that we had a bare twenty minutes until the arrival of the geese. We stretched out the wire and then our rocket expert decided that he must fire a couple of cartridges in order to make sure that the wiring was correct. The powder was removed from the cartridges and they were set up in the

pistols. Then we set off with the battery round the flash to the end of the remote control. We were in a hurry and we turned to cross the water too soon. I had high waders and could cross anywhere, but my companion stumbled and filled one boot. We hustled to the end of the flex and found that it would not go into the terminal on the battery unless the insulation were pared away, and in trying to do this Schermuly cut the ball of his thumb badly.

But eventually the job was done, the contact was made, and two little sparks of light flashed at each end of the net. The circuit was correct; all that remained was to set up the rockets in place of the trial cartridges. Back we rushed round the end of the flash. The rockets were slid into their pistols, the head string of the net was attached. Grass was strewn over the heads of the rockets and plucked wheat shoots were strewn over the grass. Twenty yards ahead of the net, 5 yards less than the net should, in theory, be able to throw, I made two tiny cairns of lumps of frozen clay, one opposite each end of the net. These were to be the markers, to show when the geese were within the "catching area." With a last glance at the net, which looked painfully visible even in that early morning light, we collected together the spare equipment and started back once more round the head of the flash. As we walked along it we

could hear the first geese coming and I extinguished the hurricane lamp. The geese were heading for the small fields and it was still almost too dark for them to see the sacks on their sticks. When we reached the old sea wall we found that the rest of the party had erected the portable hide. The flex, however, had not been laid the full distance and a roll of it still lay 20 yards down a bank along the barbed wire fence. At this critical stage a large skein of geese came up to the field and looked as if they would settle. But fortunately they swept back, to circle yet again over the small fields, and while they did so I rushed out and collected the coil of flex, spreading it as I returned. It reached the portable hide with exactly 2 feet to spare and was laid under one corner to the battery. Meanwhile we tried to break the top-line of the hide with tufts of grass.

Two minutes later about 300 geese came straight for the 100-acre field, and settled in the middle of it. This was excellent, we thought, for they were directly downwind of our net and seemed likely in a few hours to feed up to it. Meanwhile more skeins came slipping in over the belt of trees in the background. They came with great confidence, flying low and setting their wings as soon as they reached the edge of the field. They came in an almost unbroken stream. By the time that the sun rose, oval and



4.—"THEN BEGAN THE LABORIOUS TASK OF EXTRICATING THE BIRDS FROM THE NET"



5.—RINGING ONE OF THE CAPTURED WHITE-FRONTS AND—

orange red, behind us, there were over a thousand geese feeding in a tight pack in front. Then came a startling development. A family party of geese rose from the great crowd and flew low towards the corner of the field—our corner. They settled about 40 yards in front of the net. Soon they were followed by others, until a regular flight began. Bunch after bunch swept in and pitched among the ever thickening crowd in front of our net. So far everything had gone unbelievably right. For the next hour we lay patiently in the hide as the phalanx of geese advanced into the "catching area." They were 10 yards from the little clay cairns—5 yards—2 yards—passing between them, and then the cairns were swallowed up in the milling crowd of geese which advanced still closer to the net. Was all in readiness? The wireless battery, the leads—the leads, where were they? They were nowhere to be seen. Two feet of the end of the flex had been pulled under the edge of the hide in that hurried last minute, but they were not there now. We peered out through the observation slit in the front of the hide. The black shiny flex led towards us, but just outside the hide it turned off at right angles. While we had been camouflaging the hide someone had kicked away the end of the lead; it was outside the hide, on the same side of it as the geese. What were we to do? Slowly and dexterously we lifted a corner of the hide and reached out towards the lead. My fingers closed over grass stems, over a bramble, but not over the missing flex. The others squinted down through the observation slit. "Another 4 inches and you'll do it." With an effort I reached the flex and pulled it into the hide—and the geese had not seen me. The crisis was over, and the birds were another 5 yards closer to the net.

In the forefront of their advance, I noticed a Pink-foot, no doubt one of the three young birds which we had observed scattered among the White-fronts all through the winter.

Now was the critical time. At what distance would the geese first see and keep away from the net? Would they turn about and walk quickly away from it once they had detected its presence? We watched anxiously. The flock had been advancing in the usual manner of wild geese. The front line had been feeding steadily forward and bulging suddenly where an odd bird or a family party had been chased forward by a quarrelsome gander in the rear. At length there came a time when the fugitive birds would no longer run forward. If pursued they turned and threaded their way back through the flock. They would come no nearer to the net than about 4 yards. The crowd in the "catching area" could not get any thicker. It had reached saturation point. Now was the critical moment. Harris got ready with his camera and Schermuly with the ends of his flex.

"All right, let her go!" The circuit was made and the rockets fired; and simultaneously the whole flock of 1,300 geese rose into the air with a combined roar of wings and of voices (Fig. 3). We all jumped up to watch. As the cloud of birds rose we could see that a small patch of flapping geese remained on the wheat-field. We had made a catch. We climbed through the barbed wire fence and set off to run towards the net. I think the geese were more

alarmed by the sudden appearance of seven people careering across the field in scattered formation than they were by the discharge of the rockets themselves (and indeed on any future occasion we have planned to remain hidden until the uncaught birds are well clear).

As soon as I came to the net, I made a quick count—32 geese. We had succeeded. We had made the first great catch of geese for ringing. It was a satisfying moment. Then began the laborious task of extricating the birds from the net (Fig. 4). Almost before we had started, however, one bird extricated itself and flew off. But we lost no more. The plan was to ring the birds first and then extricate them afterwards. About the third bird at my end of the net turned out to be the Pink-foot which we had seen advancing into the "catching area." So the total was 30 White-fronts and one Pink-foot. Some of the geese were released one by one, but more often they were released in couples, which we thought to be the better way, as the two then flew off together. Fairly soon it became apparent that many of them could not be extricated without cutting some of the meshes of the net, and this we proceeded to do. It was astonishing to what extent the birds had become ravelled in so short a time. It was also astonishing how docile and resigned they seemed to be, and how little they struggled while being disentangled. One old gander was full of fight and continuously pecked my knee while I was extricating his neighbour and finally him. We ringed several young birds, including a family of five with their parents, but we made an error in not recording the belly markings of the adult birds we ringed. In this way it would have been possible to know the ring numbers had we seen the birds later, and to identify each without the necessity of recapturing it, for the White-fronts' black bars are of different pattern in each individual adult.

We had pulled the net at 8.40 a.m., and it was after half-past nine by the time we had finished. As soon as the work was completed we made a careful survey of the way in which the net had thrown. As on the previous evening, the rocket corner had gone over much farther than the centre. In the middle, however, more

than half of its 25-yard stretch still remained neatly furled as we had laid it before dawn. Fourteen yards of net still lay in a heap and only 11 yards had gone forward to catch our 31 geese. Had the throw been perfect at least twice that number would surely have been caught. But another snag had appeared. All the geese seemed to have been caught in the first few yards of the net, and those in the centre seemed to have pushed the net back. It seems that however free one may become of grass stems, thistles, and lumps of frozen clay, the throw may yet be spoiled by one or more of the quarry.

As we walked back to the hide some of the geese were returning to the fields, and one skein circled low over the 100 acre. They did not settle, but it was evident that they had not been disastrously frightened by the rockets.

We returned home greatly elated with our success which, in spite of the net's bad throw, was much greater than any of us, in our heart of hearts, had been expecting. At about 1 o'clock the geese were feeding on the Dumbles, and we went to look them over. A new game had been discovered—hunting the rings—and already at the first glance we were able to pick up, among the flocks, four of the birds we had had in our hands only a few hours before. One of the ganders was still pecking at his ring, which had not yet become familiar to him. Since that day it has been possible on all occasions to find one or two of those ringed, with the numbered and addressed aluminium ring on their right leg, shining brightly in the sun.

On one occasion the geese were so close to one of the Trust's observation huts, that by focusing the binoculars as near as possible I was able to read numbers on the ring quite clearly. 12804 . . . and then a lump of snow adhering to the ring obscured the last and most important of the six figures.

That is the story of our first attempt with the rocket net. Good luck was largely the cause of its success—the sort of good luck which we have come to understand and appreciate after three recent days of complete failure, in which the geese have shown themselves, as usual, complete masters of the situation.



6.—RELEASING IT

A TALE OF MARSH WITCHES

By J. WENTWORTH DAY

"SAME as witches?" said Charlie, spitting into the fire. "I've knowed several o' them. Rum owd gals tew. Dedn't dew tew cross one o' they. Wise-men tew. Useter be one on 'em in most ivery parish, time I was a little owd nipper. Cunnin' owd —!" He spat again.

Now, Charlie, whose surname I will not divulge since he is a man of sterling heart and upright principles, should have been a pirate. He looks like one. For many years he lived like one. He earned his living as a pirate might have done.

And although he can neither read nor write he has studied history sufficiently to inform me on many occasions, with varied degrees of sanguinary emphasis, that, had Fate been kinder, he would have chosen to dwell in Good Queen Bess's golden days when boarding ships and buccaneering, slitting Spanish throats and burning Papist towns were all of the education of a proper man. Charlie reckons that them was rum old times but they was rare old boys.

So you may imagine him, a little, short, square, leather-faced man with beady, brown eyes, a rat-trap mouth, crisp, short hair and hands that would throttle a gorilla, living in a shack built of old barge timbers right under the sea-wall on a certain lonely marsh on the Essex shore of the Thames estuary, that part of the estuary where it is near the open sea.

For years Charlie lived thus. In summer he fished. Winkles and white-bait, flounders and eels, mullet and bass, codling and "rokers" came alike to his nets and his lines.

In winter he shot for a living. His little grey punt prowled like a ghost from Canvey Point to Mucking Flats, from Deadman's Bay to Fisherman's Head on Foulness. Widgeon and brent geese, mallard and teal, curlew and oxbirds, green plover and golden, all fell to his punt gun or were slain by his "hand-guns." He was, I believe, the last of the true professional wild-fowlers on the Essex shore where Thames meets sea.

I never knew him do a day's work on the land. But he would build a boat, paint a ship, skipper a barge, sail a yacht, caulk a deck, or tar a boat-shed with any man, and better than most. Not that he ever sailed yachts to please yachtsmen. Far from it. He regarded yachts merely as "pretty little owd things" and yachtsmen as "them butterfly sailors."

He was so little of the land that one never even heard of him rounding up marsh bullocks, driving a farm cart or loading sheep on to the flat barges which took them from the marsh islands. But he built his own house, a trim, snug little place of four rooms with a great open fireplace on which you could burn half a boat, from the timbers of an old barge which he "salvaged." Charlie was as quick on salvage as a naval captain of the old school was on prize money.

He wore gold ear-rings in his ears. That was not in order that he might look like a pirate but because he said it gave him long sight and freedom from rheumatism. For the latter reason also he wore eel-skin garters beneath his knees. And he believed in ghosts. He had, he swore solemnly, seen several of them on the flats under the moon—drowned sailors come alive, searching for their ships, for a foothold on the land they had lost.

Charlie is still alive, still gunning. But he is not quite the man he was. For he has married and lives now in a brick house with a proper kitchen; a butcher calls once a week and a milkman leaves the milk each morning. Such things came the best of men.

On this day of which I speak, more than

twenty years ago, Charlie was still free. He lived, in this low hut, under the sea-wall within sight of the gaunt grey tower of Hadleigh Castle where once the "Owlers" flashed their midnight lanterns to smuggling cutters stealing up the misty creeks. And under the shadow of that empty castle once lived Cunnin' Murrell, the last and the greatest of the Essex wizards.

Cunnin' Murrell, as you will guess, was a wise man and a cunning one. He would bewitch you as soon as look at you. He could brew herbs, stew black cats, parboil owls, distil an essence of toads and cast the evil eye upon his enemy. He was, as they say, a head man among wizards. And that is not so long ago either, for Charlie's father remembered him. He died only in 1860. Somewhere, there is a book written about him under just that title, *Cunnin' Murrell*, which bears witness to these words. So, since I was a bachelor, in what

Murrell was the head one on 'em. A man wot lost a hoss went to owd Cunnin' Murrell and arst where he could find ut. Cunnin' Murrell sez that if this here man bring him a sack of flour an' half a salt hog or a couple o' owd hares, he'd tell him where he cud find his owd hoss.

"So the man comes back nex night wi' a sack o' good wheat flour an' a couple o' owd hares what he'd snared on Corringham Ma'sh. Then Cunnin' Murrell, he tells this here man that this here hoss was up in Suffik. So up to Suffik the man goos and there he found the hoss. Git oover ye, don't it?"

"There was another owd wise man what was parson at Laindon. He had three imps. One was like a cat an' tew on 'em was like moles. This owd parson-wizard he reckoned these here little owd imps o' his'n ud niver hut ye so long as ye didn't take a light into the room where they was. Dew ye did, they'd fly at ye! Thass what he tow'd his little owd sarvant gal, anyways.

"There was several owd wizards about them days. One on 'em lived at Mayland, on the Maldon River. A rum owd booy! He used to ride about in a high, yaller-wheeled gig, drawed by tew gret owd dawgs, nigh as big as poodles. But he niver done no harm tew noobody."

Reflecting that the eccentric gentleman of Mayland probably possessed no higher claim to wizardry than his fondness for driving dogs in tandem, I asked Charlie what he knew of Witch Hart. For I had heard of Witch Hart in every village and hamlet that lies between Thames and Crouch since I can remember.

"Witch Hart?" said Charlie. He spat reflectively into the fire. Outside a fresh wind off the sea hammered at the windows, rattled the low eaves. A great herd of curlew went low over the hut, their clear whistling sounding eerily in the firelit room. Charlie cocked his ear.

"Them owd cur-lews are a-flightin' orf the mud," he remarked. "Dessay some o' them owd Hart witches are among 'em. Yew niver know where them owd gals goo when they're dead. The owd Davvie tarn some on' em into birds.

"Which o' them Witch Harts was you a-thinkin' on? There was one owd gal lived at Farnbridge on Burnham River. She wore a reg'lar owd witch. Telly fer why. The Farnbridge chaps took her an' her owd man and 'swum' buth on 'em in the river. They hitched a rope round the buth on 'em an' towed 'em behind boats. The owd man he sunk! Damn nigh drowned tew! So they hauled he aboard and let the owd chap goo. Wizards allus float, ye see. The owd woman howsomever, she floated, so that proved she wore a witch. She got drowned in that river some time later all along o' a-pinchin' a church bell."

"How was that?"

"Well, ye see, she pinched a bell out o' the tower o' St. Michael's Church at Latchin'don, tuk that to Cricksea and tried to row oover the river to Foulness in a killer (washing tub) to Wallasea Island, where that owd witch, Mother Redcap, lived. Smith wore her proper name. What them tew owd gals was agooin' to dew wi' that there church bell noobody know, but this here owd Witch Hart she wornt strong enough in witchin' ter navigate that owd killer, so she got drowned.

"There was another owd witch called Hart what lived at Latchin'don. Might a bin the same fam'ly. I git mixed up wi' they two. She wornt a bad owd gal. She'd niver trouble ye as long as ye give her a bit o' grub. Dew ye didn't, she'd witch ye."

After that it was time to turn in.



HADLEIGH CASTLE, UNDER THE SHADOW OF WHICH LIVED CUNNING MURRELL, THE LAST AND GREATEST OF THE ESSEX WIZARDS

better place, with what better man, could one spend rough and salty week-ends than in Charlie's hut, by Charlie's side.

That night of September in the long ago, we sat before the fire of sputtering, tarry timbers in Charlie's little living-room, toasting our toes at that vast hearth-place while Charlie talked of witches and of wise men.

"Allus was witches about these here parts, time I worr a little owd nipper," said Charlie. "Canewdon was the head place for 'em. That allus had six on 'em. Whenever one owd witch died, a stone fell off the church tower at midnight fer a sign and then another owd witch ud take her place. One on 'em worr the parson's wife and another on 'em worr the butcher's wife.

"They could overlook ye, them owd witches. Give ye the Evil Eye. They could witch a man's pigs or hoss, or his missus, or his owd cow.

"If they witched ye proper yew was a gonner. Yew jes' up an' died!

"Mostly they'd on'y witch the wheel of a man's cart when he was a-drivin' hum on a dark night—or stop his owd cow givin' milk. But they'd witch an owd sow so that she et her hull litter o' young pigs as soon as she farrowed 'em.

"That dedn't dew to cross them owd witches. Ne yit the wise men. Owd Cunnin'

HOW TO KEEP AN OLD HOUSE WARM

By VITRUVIUS

ONE day during a blizzard in 1947, desperation drove me up on to the roof of the house to investigate various signs of damp, and something prompted me to count the chimney-pots. I have never yet counted them all; but before I reached three dozen it slowly dawned upon me that times have changed since the farm carts went to the station almost every week throughout the winter for coals; that smoke was emerging from only three chimneys; and that here at last was the explanation of the old family custom of sitting in front of a fire at night with a rug round one's shoulders.

In a well-equipped modern house chimneys which are out of use can be shut off at the bottom by hooking down a damper or iron lid to close the flue; but in old houses dampers, if they exist at all, are primitive in design and seldom function. Mine was clearly a case for simple and drastic remedies. Fortunately some sheet zinc was available, so with a pair of metal shears it did not take long to cut and fit "night caps" to every chimney-pot not in regular use.

The result was immediate and spectacular: the draughts had disappeared. A single bar soon warmed bedrooms where previously a two-bar electric radiator had hardly made itself felt; the living-room fire made some impression on the thermometer; and the passages became tolerable without a greatcoat. It is true that we had already done many things designed to cure draughts, of which more anon, but the chimneys were certainly the most important. And besides draughts, caps keep out both rain and jackdaws.

The "night caps" were simple enough to make: just sheets of zinc about six inches larger all round than the chimney-pots, which are 14 by 9 inches and oval in section. The six-inch margin was then cut into strips about an inch wide radiating from the centre; and after the sheets had been placed in position, each strip in turn was bent down so that the whole cap could be wired tightly in place with a couple of turns of tying wire. It was found necessary to turn up the tips of each strip in advance in order to prevent the wire from slipping down off the strips while being tightened. Since all our chimney-pots are the same size, it is a matter of only a few minutes to remove a cap from one chimney and fit it to another when any change in domestic arrangements renders this desirable. In this respect capping is preferable to the orthodox expedient of cementing a slate down on to the top of the flue after removing the chimney-pot.

Every uncapped chimney must be the equivalent of at least one wide-open window in terms of draught-making capacity; but for all that I doubt whether the improvement in domestic temperature—and temper—would have been so marked had we not previously exhausted our ingenuity upon stopping other sources of draught. For example, old doors are usually warped; door frames far from square; and floor clearances too high. All these had already been dealt with by means of wooden battens tacked to the door frames or inserted below the carpets at the doors. Where doors leading out into the open are concerned, a floor batten for the foot of the door to close against is essential.

Old windows, too, let in a lot of draught, even when they are closed. There's no risk in an old house of dying of suffocation as one so often feels about to do in a modern luxury flat in Town. Windows are best left to a skilled joiner, and his attentions will prove well worth while. Here the lovely original panes of thin curved glass were mostly shattered by a few war-time bombs and were hastily replaced with new panes of the dead flat modern sheet glass. Unfortunately the need for additional lead on the counterweights was overlooked, modern glass being about twice the weight; and in consequence there was hardly a window which would

stay shut until this was remedied. But Hitler did not have the last word: it was a Victory flight of low-flying Spitfires in mass formation which finally shattered the few remaining original panes which had for so long stamped the house with its date and individuality in the light of the setting sun. *Sic transit gloria mundi*: but it was a small price to pay for a home of some age and tradition otherwise unscathed by war.

One more idea about saving, as opposed to generating, the little warmth one can nowadays afford. This is a tall house; and it is an elementary fact, often forgotten, that heat rises to the top of a house unless checked. The more powerful the upward current of hot air, the more is cold air drawn in from outside at the bottom in the form of draughts, and especially down uncapped disused chimneys. One of the big new ideas in house building is the provision of air ducts below floors to bring in cold air direct to the fireplace and so avoid draughts.

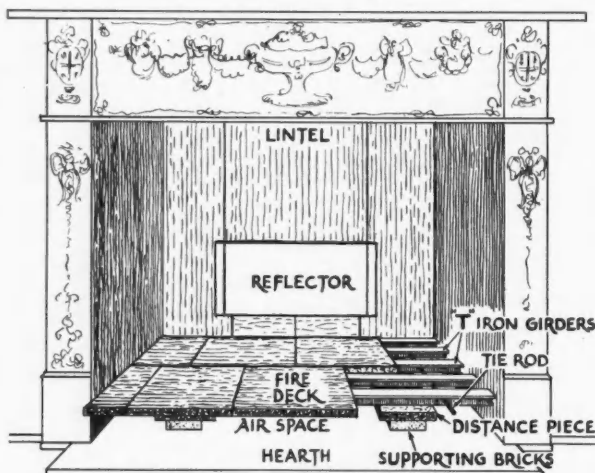


DIAGRAM OF A FIREPLACE DEvised TO GIVE THE MAXIMUM HEAT FROM A LOG FIRE

But we have not yet tried that. Some years ago, however, it happened that a partition was erected on the stairway leading from the first to the second floor. Its object was to stop the loss of heat upwards into the then empty second floor; and in that it was an appreciable success. Now its full value has been realised since the capping was completed; and it has had the originally unforeseen advantage of creating a virtually self-contained flat of the second floor which is now occupied by a second family.

To turn to the generation of heat, the big problem to-day is fuel rather than fireplaces. All modern fireplaces are so much better and more economical than the old ones that it is difficult to go far wrong. But in the country the first essential is to have at least a proportion of fireplaces designed to burn logs and nothing but logs; and unless they will take big logs the cost of cutting and chopping becomes prohibitive. Such fireplaces cannot be bought ready made, though most good firms are prepared to build one—at a prohibitive price—which with luck will not entirely ruin the appearance of a period room. To save expense we decided to have a shot at making one for ourselves. The result has been better than we expected; we have learned a few elementary facts about fireplaces which seem worth recording; and our friends think that, with a good log fire blazing, the fine Adam mantel-piece shows up to better advantage than ever before.

Our first fireplace was a success straight away, so we tried a second: it took months of labour and many alterations before it was made to go. The trouble was the chimney: it is almost hopeless to expect any fire to draw if the top of its chimney-pot is lower than any other

chimneys or bit of roof to windward of it. It still needs heightening; but in spite of that we have succeeded in making it draw well enough for most purposes.

The first thing is to clear out the old fireplace to the full size of the mantel-piece; this may mean the removal of a lot of rubble and other things if a small grate with steel front has been built in, but you cannot burn big logs without width and depth. If you are quite certain that there are no wooden beams projecting into the wall below the hearth, there is no reason why the fire should not be burned right down on the hearth. But, apart from considerations of safety, there is a lot to be said for a raised firedeck with an airspace beneath it. It seems to be an accepted fact that no big fire is likely to draw well if the height from the firedeck to the lintel of the chimney-piece is more than 30 inches; and if the lintel is higher than that above the hearth, it looks much better to raise the firedeck than to lower the lintel by means of a hood or strip of metal or glass suspended from it. The height in our first and more successful fireplace is just 30 inches, and the fire draws well because of a good chimney some 60 feet in height and a well situated chimney-pot. In our second the height has been reduced to 27 inches—24 inches is perhaps nearer the truth from what has still to be related—and still it only just refrains from smoking.

It would be easy enough to make just a raised firedeck with bricks, but the airspace presented a bit of a problem. It was solved one day when we had occasion to take up and replace an old worn out T-iron fence in the park. The T-irons were rusted through at ground level, but the metal above was sound. I had them cut to length by the blacksmith, laid horizontally, T-upright, upon two rows of distance piece and supporting bricks, and tied across with three 1/4-inch tie rods through the fence wire holes. They furnished a perfect girder frame upon which to lay the firedeck consisting of 2-inch thick firebricks each 12 inches square. And the total cost came to as many shillings as we had been quoted pounds for the professional version in bricks and mortar.

The only tricky part of the job, requiring infinite patience, is the cutting of the odd-shaped bricks required to fill in the oblique ends of the firedeck. Experts will give you many hints, but you will break many bricks before you discover that it is simply a matter of more haste less speed, and that the only method is to chip away gently with cold chisel and hammer until the two halves fall quietly apart along the line of your groove. There is no need to set any of the bricks used in the construction of the fireplace in cement or mortar. A little air space between them helps the draught, and as good wood ash accumulates—as it should be allowed to do—the cracks soon fill up. And if you tire of this type of fireplace, which I hope you will not, it is only a matter of ten minutes' work to clear it all away. It does not burn coal and it is not meant to.

The next thing is to fit up a reflector for the heat: if this is omitted all the heat will go up the chimney and little or none will come out into the room. The difference which it makes is quite astonishing. All that is required is the largest size of firebrick obtainable, about 22 inches by 12 inches, hung like a picture horizontally at the back of the fireplace by means of two bits of fencing wire from heavy nails driven into the chimney wall out of sight.

It is important that this reflector should lean well forward, and this is achieved by propping it up at the bottom on two bricks on edge; two inch thick bricks are very suitable.

The last and most important feature of the fireplace is the throat. Our first effort needed no modification; it had an old iron roof just out of sight some 36 inches above the firedeck, with nothing more in the way of a throat than a slot some 16 by 6 inches in size which was at one time capable of being closed or opened by means

of sliding doors: an early type of damper. But it serves its main purpose well in excluding down draughts and accelerating the upward flow of hot gases.

Our second effort would not function at all at first because the iron roof formerly installed had to be cleared away with all the rubble in preparing the recess for the fireplace. We had to replace it with a sheet-iron roof sloping upwards and inwards from two supporting nails just out of sight inside the side pillars. The slot was cut out on three sides only, leaving the piece to be bent upwards to try to smooth the flow of the gases. But still it would not work; and at last, after perpetrating miracles of solid geometry with card and scissors to scale, we inserted an immense funnel into the mouth of the slot reaching down to within 24 inches of the fire deck and covering its full extent. This might not have been necessary if the slot in this roof had been only 36 instead of 48 inches above

the firedeck; but the main thing is that it works.

Tall houses are perhaps in the minority. Their advantages have already been mentioned, but they also have their special problems. The dampers and other controls fitted to ordinary water furnaces, stoves, etc., have proved quite inadequate to subdue the blaze. Even in open fireplaces dry logs and good coal alike used to roar up the chimney with appalling waste. Our boiler is now under normal control after the insertion of two whole standard firebricks into its 8-inch diameter flue pipe. Our stove was got under control in the same way, for we like using it with the doors open; it now has a special back nozzle, kindly supplied by the makers, having a diameter of 4 inches against the standard 6 inches. Incidentally our water boiler furnace has been bricked up on good advice, so that the area of the firebed is about half what it previously was. It now uses less

than half the fuel. Its capacity has probably been reduced into line with our present needs, but its efficiency seems to have been enhanced.

In conclusion, a word of warning: keep your eyes wide open while trying experiments. We tried controlling the flues of chimneys at the top by using openings of varying diameters in our "night-caps." This has the surprising effect of raising the pressure in the flue to above atmospheric pressure and very soon finds out any faults in old and worn chimneys. One day after the fitting of such a cap the attic was found to be full of smoke: it had found its way through a crack in the wall. It transpired that a careless workman at some time had inserted a wooden beam, to carry a cistern, right into a chimney, and it would doubtless have set the house on fire sooner or later if his mistake had not come to light. Perhaps our experiments have not, after all, been altogether a waste of time.

THE WINSOME HYRAX

MY dictionary defines the hyrax as "a genus of small ungulates of the sub-order Hyracoidea, ranging between the *dinotheria* and the horses and mistaken by the ancients for rabbits." Which seems a somewhat high-falutin' way of referring to this winsome little fellow. In shape he is like a guinea-pig, but slightly larger (Fig. 1). His soft brown fur has gold points to some of the hairs. When he gets angry or impatient and stamps his little front feet, white fur appears in the middle of his back (Fig. 2). His hind feet are rather like a monkey's, with a very pronounced big toe, and yet he is a relative of the hippopotamus, as the shape of his front feet shows (Fig. 3). In captivity a hyrax is fairly silent, the only sound he makes being a sort of high-pitched rattle; the higher the pitch the crosser he is, usually. In the wild state, his vocal effort is anything but pleasant, or so you think the first time you hear it. Weird and most eerie shrieks pierce the silence of the night, sometimes tailing off into a rumbling croak. When one has lived in Kenya near the forest for many years, however, one grows used to this cacophony. In fact one comes almost to like it. I have caused some mirth when, on leaving a farm, I have complained of missing the sound of the hyrax in the night.

For many years we, as children, had a hyrax as a pet, called Twinkletoes. He came as a tiny thing of about two to three weeks old, and there was great rivalry between us to give him his bottle, which was nothing more than a medicine bottle with a piece of rag dangling from it, from which he sucked with great vigour. He seemed to thrive on the milk mixture we gave him, which had lime water and cod-liver oil in it, and used to signify his impatience by calling loudly for his bottle when he considered we were being slow.

At about the same time I was given a blue Persian kitten, called Beau. After the first suspicious manoeuvres had been executed, accord-



1.—IN SHAPE THE HYRAX IS LIKE A GUINEA-PIG, BUT SLIGHTLY LARGER

ing to the cat tradition, by Beau, they became fast friends, and gambolled together as all young things do. The alliance continued all their lives and neither seemed to outgrow his youth, for they seemed always ready for a romp whenever Twinkletoes was let out of his cage.

The cage was a most spacious affair with two storeys. The staircase was an endless source of amusement to him, and each part of his domain had its special uses. The darkened compartment was used only at night, or after an especially tiring game with Beau. The open-fronted room next door to the bedroom was

used for reclining in a pensive mood during the day, and the living-room on the ground floor for feeding and as a landing-stage for take-offs from the stairs.

His diet was entirely vegetarian, though an occasional cake crumb would be eaten. A choice tit-bit was rose leaves, and as a *pièce-de-résistance*, rose petals. At these he used to roll his little eyes in ecstasy and close the inner of his two eyelids.

One day at school I received a letter saying that he had died, presumably of old age.

Since then I have had two hyraxes. The first time the "boys" brought me a full-grown one. I was rather frightened to begin with, for hyraxes have two big business-like yellow teeth, in addition to their smaller ones, but finally I dared to stroke it (with five pairs of gloves on), at the same time talking to it softly and soothingly.

As time went on and Minnie, as she was called, appeared to appreciate these ministrations, I shed another pair of gloves at each time of going to her, and finally she allowed me to pick her up and fondle her. On the third day I draped her round my neck, where she nestled quite contentedly while I went about my household tasks. But alas! the call of the wild eventually proved stronger than her love for me, and one night she left us and rejoined her wild comrades.

George was the second, and never have I had a pet so beloved. He inherited Twinkletoes's cage, but he was hardly ever put in it, and had the house to roam in at his pleasure. His tastes in food became very catholic, perhaps as a result of his freedom in such novel surroundings. He sampled silk pyjamas, and seemed to think silk irresistible ever afterwards. He tried everything, progressing from biscuits to bully beef, and finally book bindings. But even his hardened stomach couldn't take book bindings, and he died of poisoning. JABIRU.



2.—WHEN HE GETS ANGRY OR IMPATIENT WHITE FUR APPEARS IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS BACK. (Right) 3.—HIS FRONT FEET SHOW HIM TO BE A RELATIVE OF THE HIPPOPOTAMUS



15, CATHERINE PLACE, WESTMINSTER

THE RESIDENCE OF
THE HON. JAMES BORTHWICK

By CHRISTOPHER HUSSEY

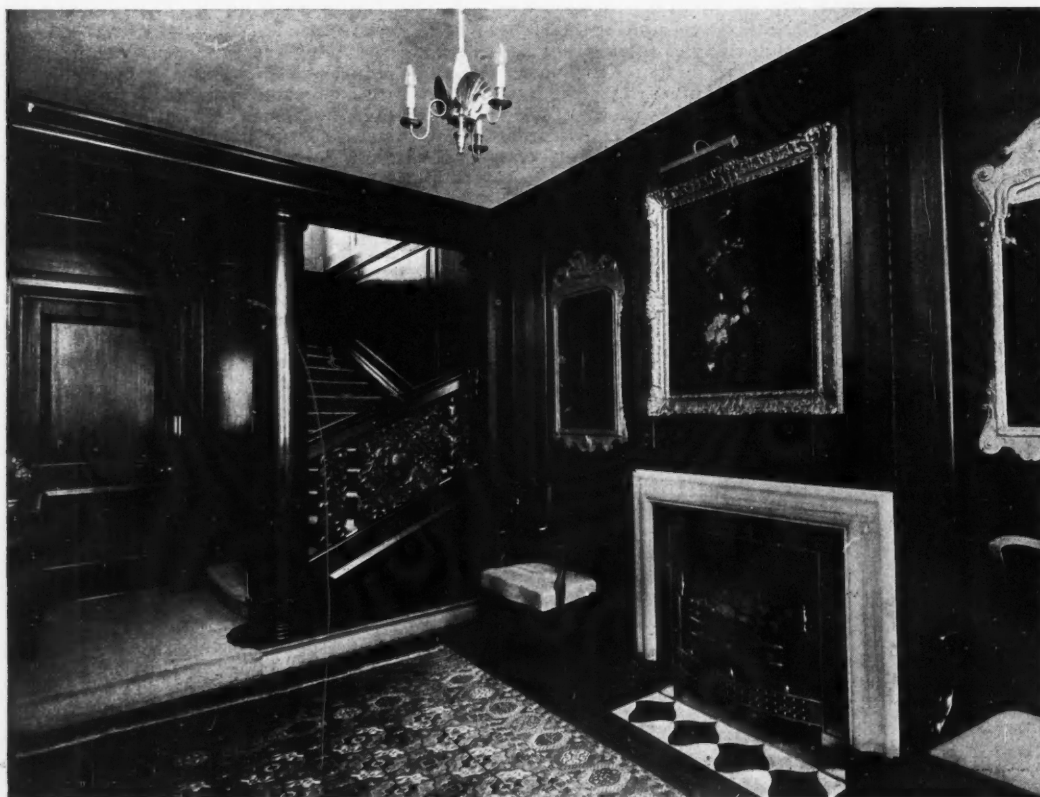
A restatement of the Georgian town house tradition to meet modern needs, designed by Mr. Robert Lutyens in 1938.

THE "precinct" of quiet old streets lying between Buckingham Palace and Victoria Station probably occupies part of the site of the Mulberry Garden to which Pepys, Evelyn, and Restoration society resorted. It still has a subtly rural character, although its adjacency to the Palace—or rather the Royal Mews—Parliament, St. James's Park, and Wellington Barracks, not to mention a noted brewery, began to bring its quite humble houses into considerable demand forty years ago. Between the wars nearly every one, some of which had degenerated to near lodging-house status, had been rehabilitated and not a few rebuilt, of which No. 15, Catherine Place was completed only on the eve of the last war.

In its design Mr. Robert Lutyens had to relate a more complex house, occupying the sites of two older ones, to the scale of the little Georgian street. This was perhaps helped by a by-law relative to basement lighting, which necessitated a slight setting back of the building line; but the desire to preserve the little garden at the back, containing a tree, further limited the depth available, except at basement level. The plan above ground is actually a square of 28 ft. Within this, accommodation was required for, besides the owner and his wife, their adult family and three or four domestics. Inevitably therefore the house had to be a high one, relatively to its neighbours, in the façade of which little diminution of scale was feasible within its four visible storeys, if the boys' rooms in the fourth were to be adequately proportioned. As it is, three maids' rooms are contained in a fifth storey invisible from the street. Since, too, five bathrooms were required, central heating, and provision for some social life, it is evident that the architect's task was no easy one: no less than to devise an up-to-date version of the kind of West End family residence standardised by Cubitt in the 1820s (which had evolved from the types devised by the Committee of Architects set up after the Great Fire) on an area of about half the usual depth. To have got in so much as he has without any feeling of



1.—THE STREET FRONT



constriction or of excessive height—only one additional storey being visible from the street—is a considerable achievement.

The Cubitt plan worked well enough so long as servants and space were plentiful. Its defects, now well known, include wearisome repetition and great waste of space in the staircase arrangement, a tendency to sacrifice too much space to a high drawing-room, the lack of conveniences, and untidy back elevations. In tackling the problems afresh it would, of course, have been possible to produce something wholly modern in concrete and glass which would have had many specious and perhaps actual advantages: a "sun room," a lift, a staircase lit by continuous window, a "general-purposes-studio," etc. However, those questionable benefits were not included in the client's requirements, which were for a traditional type of house harmonising with the precinct. Consequently the discipline involved in handling the classical

2.—HALL AND STAIRCASE



3.—THE PINE-PANELLED DRAWING-ROOM ON THE FIRST FLOOR, AND (below) 4.—THE FIREPLACE SIDE

tradition was imposed, and that makes the architect's solution really more interesting than if he had been entirely free to be original. Indeed, it can be contended that, given the materials and thought, the classical approach is here shown to be not only still capable of meeting all the requirements of a London family house but to be the most satisfactory medium. For where compression combined with distinction of design is required, the discipline of the classical principles can be of greater help, though it may sound paradoxical to say so, than the freedom of loose functionalism that often seems to solve problems without doing so architecturally.

Externally, the only comments I need make are on the elegant doorway, nice stock brickwork with scarlet lintels, and to say I do not see the need for two of the windows being small—one logically lights a bathroom, the other merely the bed end of the room—unless to vary the fenestration pattern in preparation for the break in it on the floor above, where a party wall abuts. At the back, the elevation is plain except for the carrying up of the boiler flue in semblance of a buttress just off centre, and the staggering of the staircase windows (Fig. 10).





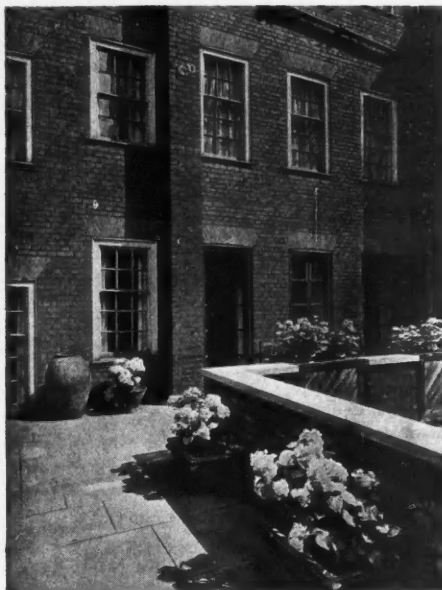
5 and 6.—THE STAIRCASE OF MAHOGANY, LOOKING DOWN TO THE HALL AND AT THE FIRST-FLOOR LANDING



7.—FROM ENTRANCE LOBBY TO HALL



8.—SECOND-FLOOR STAIRCASE LANDING



9.—THE LIBRARY. (Middle) 10.—FROM THE GARDEN BEHIND. (Right) 11.—BATHROOM OF PRINCIPAL BEDROOM

Much space is gained here by means of the two terraces at right angles to each other, beneath which are pantry, serving-room, and a bathroom looking into the garden proper. Tubs of flowers, and a magnolia tree in the lower part, enliven this two-level garden.

The ordered compactness of the ground-floor plan is delightful. You enter into a lobby (Fig. 7) immediately to the left of which is a cloakroom-lavatory, then open the door to your right into the panelled hall which can also serve as a downstairs sitting-room (Fig. 2). The door from the lobby is paired with another to a sizable dining-room which has three windows to the garden. At the inner end of the hall a door to a service-space and basement stairs adjoins the foot of the staircase, of which the carved balustrade adds to the agreeable old Dutch atmosphere of the hall.

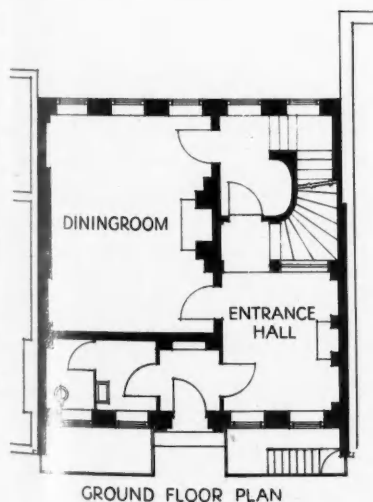
The staircase, of mahogany, occupying the south-east corner of the plan is ingeniously designed for economy of space with that dignity appropriate for the ascent to the drawing-room. Though rectangular, its inner side is curved to the half-oval partition enclosing the service-space, round which is carried a continuous solid balustrade with shaped handrail (Fig. 5). Above the

first-floor landing (Fig. 6), of which the edge follows the same curve, balusters carry the handrail with enriched canted newels. In Fig. 8 we see the second-floor landing where the newel at the head of the descending flight stands out dark to the right of the window. There are two steps down in the landing's floor, the second of which is hard to see in the illustration because the skirting board is painted black. The arching of the ceiling here marks the ending of the "important" part of the staircase, which performs the rest of its ascent rectangularly. When one compares both the effectiveness and ship-like compactness of this staircase with the huge sky-lit wells of older London houses, the economy of space achieved can be taken to have set off the lavishness in craftsmanship applied.

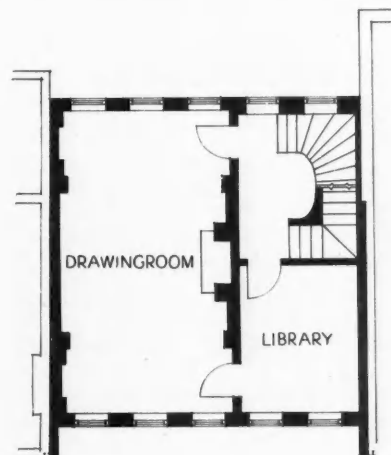
The first floor provides a drawing-room 28 ft. long, with windows east and west and the long wall mostly occupied by a fine Aubusson tapestry (Fig. 3). This, with some smaller pieces, and the owner's collection of old glass, ordained the arrangement of the pine panelling to which the architect has applied well-executed carved enrichment round fireplace and doorways (Fig. 4). Next to it, and completing the first floor, is a small oak-panelled library with built-in

bookcase (Fig. 9). In both rooms the quality of the woodwork, as in the staircase, is a welcome reminder that the requisite craftsmanship for such carpentry existed so recently as 1939. But how much longer will it survive without opportunity for its exercise?

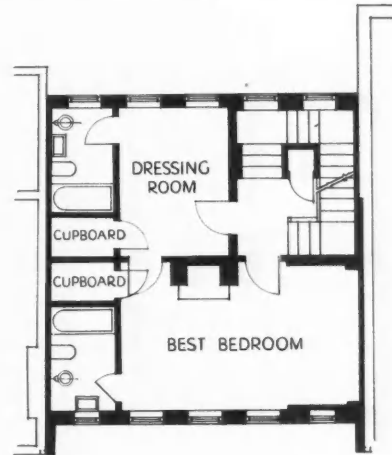
The owners' bedroom occupies the length of the front except for the bathroom (Fig. 11) in the north end and a fitted hanging cupboard adjoining. This arrangement is duplicated for the dressing-room at the back. The two upper floors each contain three bedrooms and a bathroom, with, in addition, the linen cupboard on the top floor. There are no attics, the front rooms on the top floor being set back, which incidentally provides a parapeted sitting-out place, while at the back the wall is carried up sheer to the full height of five storeys. A shallow hipped roof accommodates the water storage tanks. Thus within half the area of a 19th-century London house four reception and eight bedrooms with a much larger ratio of plumbing has been provided. Yet, owing to the proportioning of the spaces and their members ordained by the classical discipline, we are not conscious of the compression and actual reduction of dimensions which has taken place. The impression is, on the contrary, of roominess and even of a certain amplitude.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 FEET

12.—PLANS

THE SPRING MIGRATION

By R. M. LOCKLEY

BEAUTIFUL is the spring, and at last she is here. Softly she has come to us in the coloured days of rain and sun about the end of March and the beginning of April. On many warm days in January and February one saw the snowdrops and the first primroses and the varnished rays of the celandines and thought that spring had come. And earlier there had been hot-house daffodils in the shops—very fine and gorgeous blooms, but perhaps too gorgeous; one admired them as evidence of man's skill, but thought of the blowy freshness and strength of the wild daffodils on West Country hedge-banks.

All these signs were, like the new vigour of the sunlight, but promises, and then the east wind returned and the leaves of the honeysuckle, rashly opened in the wood and began to curl up, and day after day the frost shrivelled the tender growth of the first flowers. Only the hardy periwinkle seemed unmoved by this harshness, and stared at the whitened grass with its pale eye in the centre of the violet blossom. And the mistle-thrush sang undaunted from the branches of a tall mimosa in the shelter of the valley by the sea.

Here, too, the first migrants might be seen—the black redstart, the chiffchaff and the blackcap. Some might with reason argue that they had never left the mild south-west at all. It is true that we had seen the black redstart many times during the winter about the old church on the sea-wall and the precincts of a ruined castle. With their love of haunting old buildings and with their russet-red tails and slate-brown upper parts, black redstarts seem almost relics of the days of feudal pageantry. But now the dun immature plumage had given way to a rich black livery in the male, and he had begun to sing his quiet, metallic, warbling song.

The chiffchaff often winters in the south-west and so does an occasional blackcap. (In the sub-tropical gardens of Treco, Isles of Scilly, the chiffchaff is practically a resident.) On fine days in February one heard the sweet double-note from the leafless tips of the willows and knew that one at least had not gone as far as Africa. A year ago, in the disastrous snows, none was recorded in the west.

Of the true migrants the lesser black-backed gull is really the first to return. Individuals suddenly appear over river and reservoir in mid-February, although the main body arrives a whole month later.

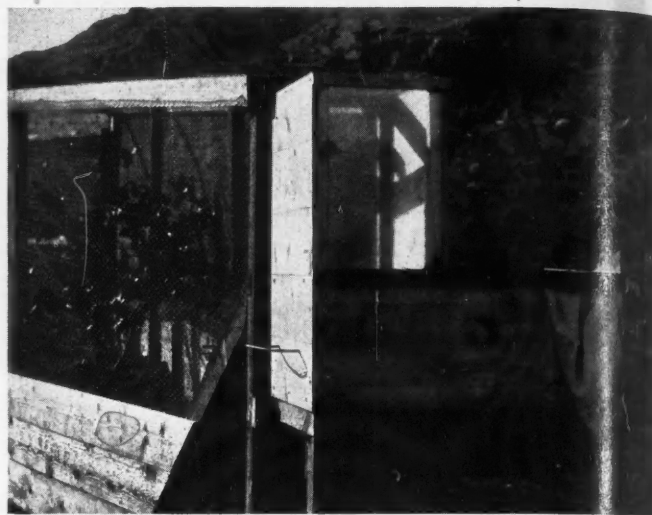
True migration is, of course, best observed on the coast and easiest of all upon open wind-swept islands such as Skokholm and Lundy in the west and the Isle of May in the east. Here there is little cover to provide sanctuary for wintering, and every non-breeding bird is necessarily a migrant.

Here the bright silvery blue-and-white cock wheatears appear about March 14, a few days in advance of their buff-breasted mates. Usually, too, the beautiful hoopoe appears a few days later, seeming to be amazingly at home in this vivid open environment, as it digs at clumps of thrift in search of insects. It is a tame bird, but not easy to trap, though the first hoopoe ringed in Britain was caught at Skokholm. Hoopoes may continue to appear up to May 1.

All through March numberless little parties of meadow-pipits may be seen hurrying along the coast northwards on their way to Scotland, the Faroes and Iceland. One almost forgets the meadow-pipits, accepting their cheerful little notes as part of the wild scene, but without them the wild shore would be wintry indeed in these early weeks.

The last days of March bring chaffinches and greenfinches, rooks and jackdaws (the rooks generally have young black "faces"), the first of the willow-warblers (Fig. 2) and, sometimes, a swallow, all on passage to the north. Sand-martins hurry past in the cool air, or stay to snatch some flies in some sunny, windless nook. In this last week of March, and in the first week of April, too, rarer birds may appear: perhaps a serin, an ortolan, a Lapland bunting, a snow-bunting, and, usually, shore-larks, are recorded. Several birds in immature plumage are difficult to identify in the field, but when caught in the ringing-traps (Fig. 3) at the bird observatories now established on our coasts they can be identified by a comparison with the colour plates and descriptions in the *Handbook of British Birds* and with cabinet specimens, when differences in the colour and measurements of tail, wings and claw can be discerned.

The wheatear, chiffchaff, willow-warbler and swallow migration intensifies during the first weeks of April. At any time from the end of March to the end of April the ring-ouzel and white wagtails arrive, the former very shy but clearly identifiable as well by their white breast-



3.—THE CATCHING-BOX OF A HELIGOLAND BIRD-TRAP. The birds are driven along inside the wire funnel to the glass, where they drop and fly to another glass out of sight in the box below. They are then caught by a hand inserted through the sleeve at the far end of the box

plate as by their alarm cry, which is higher and wilder than the blackbird's. The sweet note of the common sandpiper can be heard all along the shore at this time.

Now the plaintive "cōō-ee" of the stone-curlew rings over the central downs and plains. The movements of chaffinches, greenfinches, linnets and a few goldfinches ease off by mid-April. They are settling to their nesting affairs. The cuckoo is here and with him has arrived the much-overlooked tree-pipit, whose pale legs with short hind-claws, and yellowy breast, distinguish it from other pipits. Meadow-pipits are less numerous as migrants and those seen are, by mid-April, almost all residents. Now come the nightingales and the garden-warblers, and the delicious-voiced wood-warblers to swell the anthem of the copse and beechen hangers. The passage of swallows and sand-martins continues and is augmented in the third week of April by house-martins and in the last week by swifts.

On fresh water yellow wagtails, dunlin and sanderling, teal, shoveler, and, sometimes, a pintail, can be watched with glasses; they are here to-day and gone to-morrow—in April. By the sea's edge the common sandpipers become scarcer, but the purple sandpipers and turnstones may remain late into the summer.



1.—HOW TO HOLD AND RING A CHAFFINCH. The bird is held gently but firmly with its neck between the first and the second finger and one of its legs is extended between the third and the fourth finger to receive the ring. (Right) 2.—THE WILLOW-WARBLER, WHICH REACHES THIS COUNTRY DURING THE LAST DAYS OF MARCH



4.—A COCK REDSTART CARRYING FOOD TO ITS NEST SITUATED IN A HOLE IN A TREE. Redstarts arrive in mid-April. (Right) 5.—A COCK WHINCHAT, ONE OF THE SUMMER BIRDS THAT REACHES THESE SHORES EARLY IN MAY

Redstarts (Fig. 4) herald the early part or the third week in April, and sedge-warblers, grasshopper-warblers and whitethroats arrive before the 21st. Often a late redwing or a fieldfare is seen at this time. The goldcrests are already building their nests in the conifers, but some, having wintered with us, have flown back to the north. The lesser whitethroat and the pied flycatcher, never very numerous species on passage, are among the late-April arrivals. This is the time to hear the whimbrel coming up over the sea from the south; their rich whistling cry is a familiar note on the coast, throughout May and even into June. The last days of April bring the corn-crake, too; it is flushed from the dead bracken stems and often seeks shelter in a rabbit-hole on the little islands, but inland it is rarely heard to-day. It flies on to its breeding-grounds in the late-cropped meadows of the Hebrides and western Ireland, where it is still numerous.

The first days of May in the bird observatories are good for rarities: perhaps a white-spotted bluethroat, a barred warbler, a yellow-

drowned warbler, and, often, a quail, especially if the wind be east and the weather warm and hazy. This first week of May brings the nightjar, the Greenland wheatear, the whinchat (Fig. 5), the reed-warbler and the spotted flycatcher.

It is significant that probably 90 per cent. of the small migrants which visit the islands off the coast of Britain on passage are young birds. In the autumn it is the birds of the year that are the first to migrate (as Gätke noted in his book on Heligoland, 1895) and it is these young birds that are most noticed on the islands. Again, in the spring it is the yearling bird that is most usually met with, often so late that one wonders how it can find time to breed in that season. In fact, willow-warblers and whitethroats, for instance, seen on passage so late as the end of May and early June can rear only one brood, if they breed at all.

Even rare birds caught on the islands are generally birds under one year old, and not in fully adult plumage, for it is these youngsters that are more likely to get lost than the experienced adult migrant.

It is safe to say, I think, that if all birds hurried to their breeding-grounds with the speed of the experienced adult we should see very little of migration on the remote islands, except casually after severe storms. It is the young bird that, without experience of migration and guided only by an inherited instinct, strays by more easy stages southwards in the autumn and covers the small islands with its wandering bands.

In the spring, with its sexual organs slowly developing (never having bred before) and with no experience of flying north, it "feels" its way north quite without the sureness of the old breeders, which by that time are already engaged in nesting cares in mainland woods and fields and moors.

The last of the migrants to arrive is one of the greatest wanderers, even reaching Iceland, though it does not breed in Scotland or Ireland—the turtle-dove, whose contented purring in mid-May from the increasing shade of the young copses and the briar-entangled hedges signifies the end of spring and the beginning of summer.

THE WHITE HOUSE ◊ By MICHAEL BLACKMORE

WHEN I was reading COUNTRY LIFE of January 2 the other day, a black-and-white illustration on the editorial page caught my eye. It was of a white house standing at the end of a sea-wall against a background of low sand-dunes, and four wild ducks in flight occupied the foreground. There was something strangely familiar about it all, even though the reproduction was rather too small to show much of the detail. Where *was* this place, I wondered, the illustration of which evoked such strong feelings of past intimacy?

Then suddenly I recognised the picture. It was of the White House which overlooks the estuary of the River Taw in North Devon at the spot where the Braunton Marshes begin to lose themselves amid the desolate, wind-swept Burrows, with their 2,500 acres of alternating dunes and flat marram-covered "pans." Casting my mind back over the arches of the years, I began to recall the excitement of those early days spent at Braunton, when I was a schoolboy naturalist, eager to observe and note down every unfamiliar bird, flower and insect that inhabited this pocket-sized sanctuary of wild life.

There was, for instance, the day when I saw a merlin sitting among the sandhills with the sun shining on his back so that it reflected the most exquisite pastel-blue colour. I remembered also the hen-harrier that I had watched quartering the marshes by the duck-ponds on a wet autumn afternoon, when the wind set up a blinding sandstorm which stung my cheeks and forced me to take shelter behind the sea-wall. But perhaps the most interesting bird I saw there was an osprey, a large brown-backed and cream-colored hawk with a magnificent wing-span and

graceful, soaring flight. It passed over the marshes one morning and followed the line of the estuary down to the sea, flapping slowly in the direction of Lundy—the island that lies twenty miles off the coast where the Bristol Channel merges into the wild Atlantic. Ospreys used to breed on Lundy long ago, but owing to continued persecution they are now extinct as a British breeding species.

The Burrows were a favourite haunt of mine in the summer, when, armed with a butterfly-net and collecting box, I scoured the place for caterpillars and insects. Clouded yellow butterflies were often plentiful there in August. It was sometimes difficult in strong sunlight for the eye to follow them in flight, since their saffron-coloured wings blended closely with the background of golden dunes. More easy to follow were the silver-washed fritillaries which flew with great speed from one bramble thicket to another; one might see twenty or thirty of these fine butterflies in the course of an afternoon. Hawk-moths were also numerous at times. In September the rather rare convolvulus hawk-moth arrived from the Continent, only to perish with the first frosts of autumn; and in some years the caterpillars of the gruesome death's-head hawk (the largest of our native moths) might be found feeding on potato leaves in Braunton Great Field near by—one of the few surviving examples of the Anglo-Saxon method of "strip" cultivation.

And what of the White House itself? It has been immortalised by W. N. P. Barbellion (whose real name was Bruce Frederick Cummings) in his *Last Diary*. This, and its companion volume *The Journal of a Disappointed*

Man, earned for their author the reputation of being one of the foremost British diarists of the present century, though he did not live to enjoy any fame from these literary achievements. He died in 1919, at the age of thirty-one, after a long and painful illness, and his *Last Diary* was published a year later. While he lay on his death-bed at Gerrard's Cross, Barbellion remembered the White House on Braunton Marsh and described his impressions of it in the pages that were to become his own memorial:

"In my rambles in search of bird or beast, I used occasionally, while eating sandwiches at midday on a sandhill top, to turn my field-glasses on the cottage idly. For long I saw no one. Then one spring, while thousands of lapwings circled above my head, calling indignantly 'Little boo-oy,' and larks dotted the blue sky everywhere in little white-hot needle-points of song, I saw a tiny man—a manikin—come out of this tiny cottage—a doll's house—and throw some corn to the chickens. He was three miles away, and by the time I arrived at the cottage, the little man had disappeared. It was a little four-roomed cottage, with no path leading up to it, no garden, no enclosure, only a few hardy shrubs to keep the sandy soil from drifting. For a long time I never saw him again and began to think he had been an hallucination. But the desolate cottage was still there and the chickens were still alive, so they must have been fed."

For many years now the White House has been uninhabited. Like a solitary sentinel it guards the marshes, where the peewits still utter their plaintive calls and the skylarks fill the air with their unceasing, effortless song.

NEW CARS DESCRIBED

THE A40 AUSTIN

By J. EASON GIBSON

THE A40 Austin, a completely new model from the Austin factory, sets new standards in the competitively priced small-car class, as the three most important factors in any car—stability, comfort, and performance—have all been raised noticeably. Under the old system of taxation this new model would have been described as a Ten, but the manufacturers have employed a type name which gives some indication of the car's capabilities; the 40, in fact, indicates the power output of the engine. As part of a process of rationalisation, the A40 supersedes both the 8-h.p. and the 10-h.p. model.

The four-cylinder overhead-valve engine, 1,200 c.c. in capacity, is of similar design to the engine produced during the war and afterwards fitted to the 16-h.p. model. It is of interest to make certain comparisons between the A40 and the previous 10-h.p. model, which was of practically identical engine capacity. By the use of

kept to a minimum by the extensive use of rubber bushes. On cars for export the tyre size is increased to 5.25 x 16, to combat the more severe road conditions likely to be encountered.

The appearance of the car is something quite new for an Austin, but, despite its modern lines, internal room and comfort have not been sacrificed. Owing to the use of independent front springing, the rear seat has been brought away from its previous position over the rear axle, with consequent increase in freedom from pitching and road shocks. The front mudguards are in two parts longitudinally, so that in the event of relatively minor damage only a portion requires replacement. The car is upholstered in leather, and the general internal equipment and finish are on a high level for a model in this price class. On the car I tested a heater and screen de-mister was fitted, but this is listed as an extra and may be had for £7 13s. 4d., including

sion causes slight worry lest, when higher speeds are reached, the car should prove unstable. In fact, the new suspension has made this Austin model the outstanding car of its size and price on the market to-day. At speeds over 30 m.p.h. the softness of the springing, suitable as it is for lower speeds, completely disappears, and it is possible to corner in an enterprising manner without losing stability or accuracy. At main-road cruising speeds the excellence of the suspension is best described by saying that one becomes quite unconscious that the car is sprung.

An unusual feature on a car of this type is the high cruising speed that can be maintained. The speed which can be theoretically maintained for extended periods without loss of reliability is 58.2 m.p.h., but I found in practice that the car settled down at 60 to 62, and would maintain this speed for as long as road conditions would permit. High average speeds can be safely achieved and, apart from the excellence of the suspension, the credit for this goes largely to the brakes. These are hydraulically operated on the front wheels; the rear-wheel braking is mechanical. The front brakes are of the two-leading-shoe type, which give greater braking effort without fading under extreme conditions. The hand-brake lever is well placed under the dashboard and is of the pistol-grip type. Owing to the willingness of the engine and the car's cornering capabilities, most of my test was carried out at relatively high speeds and, in my opinion, a better petrol-consumption figure would be obtained by the average driver.

The only criticisms I have refer to the lighting and the horn, although I understand efforts are already being made to render the horn more effective. Owing to the lamps being mounted in the wings, it has been necessary to restrict the lamp-case size, with the result that some distracting secondary rays shine upwards; and in fog or mist this would prove disturbing. That low-speed pulling power has not been sacrificed to maximum speed was proved on Edge Hill—between Banbury and Stratford-on-Avon—where, despite my deliberately approaching the hill slowly and changing down late, the speed never fell below 20 m.p.h. on third gear. It is possible, and it appears to have no harmful effects on the engine or transmission, to take the car down to as low a speed as 10 m.p.h. on top gear, and pull away again without difficulty.

To the usual purchaser of a small family car in the lower price class the Austin A40 will certainly bring a new conception of what economy motoring can and should be. Its stability, comfort, and effortless performance make it the outstanding car in its class at the present time. It is interesting that the high opinion I hold of the car has been confirmed by correspondents in the U.S.A., who write that everyone there is most impressed with how safe it is to drive under wintry conditions, permitting higher speeds than can be done in safety on many of the unwieldy native products.



THE FOUR-DOOR SIX-WINDOW A40 AUSTIN

overhead valves, and other refinements, the engine power has been increased from 30 to 40, with the result that the effective cruising and maximum speeds have been raised by approximately 5 m.p.h. An external oil filter is provided, and the A40 also employs the previously described Austin radiator, whereby loss of water through expansion or surge is obviated.

The chassis side-members are of box section with massive cross-members, also box section, both front and rear. Extra cross bracing is provided at the frame centre, and the complete frame is very stiff torsionally. The item of greatest interest and value is the independent suspension employed at the front. Apart from its advantages from the aspect of stability and comfort, this type of suspension permits the engine to be fitted further forward in the frame, so that greater passenger and luggage space can be provided on a given wheelbase. The front suspension of the A40 is by helical springs and wishbones, mounted on rubber bushes, assisted by double-acting hydraulic dampers; the rear suspension is effected by long semi-elliptic laminated springs, again with assistance from hydraulic dampers, which are interconnected by an anti-roll bar.

A built-in jacking system is fitted to the frame, and this can be operated from inside the car, through trap doors in the floor, by the wheel-brace. The battery is fitted under the bonnet, and a tool compartment is similarly mounted against the bulkhead. The bonnet is locked from the driving seat, so that, with the doors locked, it is impossible for anyone to interfere with the engine. The bonnet is of the popular alligator type, but gives much better accessibility than the average bonnet of this kind. Points requiring periodic lubrication have been

purchase tax. Separate bucket-type seats are used for the driver and front passenger, and the driving seat is free from most of the criticisms levelled at some modern car seats. A centre arm-rest is fitted in the back seat, and an unusual amount of attention has been paid to providing receptacles for the usual impedimenta of travel. A large locker is provided in the fascia, a parcel shelf extending the width of the car is fitted under the instrument board, pockets are provided in both front doors, and there are a shelf behind the rear-seat squab and compartments under both front seats.

The internal measurements are greater than one would expect from the appearance of the car. From seat to roof measures 36½ ins. and 34½ ins. in the front and the rear respectively, and from floor to roof is 46 ins. Across both front seats is 46 ins., and the equivalent measurement over the back seat is 48 ins. The inevitable transmission tunnel is of modest dimensions, and is only a slight inconvenience. Although a driver of average height cannot see his nearside wing, the vision generally is very good, aided by the forward position and the falling bonnet line. Passengers in the rear seat obtain a good view all round, including straight ahead. A good view can also be had above, as this is one of the few cars retaining a sliding roof. The luggage space has been increased, owing to the use of independent suspension, and the spare wheel and the large tools are carried in a compartment below the luggage space.

My first impressions were very good, even before driving off, as the lack of noise from the engine, and the comfortable driving position, are exceptional for a mass-produced car. For the first few miles the softness of the new suspen-

THE A40 AUSTIN

Makers: Austin Motor Co., Longbridge, Birmingham.	Brakes .. Girling
Price .. £441 11s. 8d.	hydromech.
(including P.T. of £96 11s. 8d.)	Suspension Independent
Cubic cap. 1,200 c.c.	(front)
B: S .. 65.48x89mm.	Wheelbase 7 ft. 8½ ins.
Cylinders .. Four	Track (front) 4 ft. 0½ in.
Valves .. Overhead	Track (rear) 4 ft. 1½ ins.
B.H.P. .. 40 at 4,300	Overall length 12 ft. 9 ins.
r.p.m.	Overall width 5 ft. 1 in.
Carb. .. Zenith	Overall height 5 ft. 2½ ins.
Ignition .. Lucas coil	Ground clearance 6½ ins.
Oil filter .. By-pass	Turning circle 38 ft.
1st gear .. 21.87 to 1	Weight .. 20 cwt.
2nd gear .. 13.2 to 1	Fuel cap. .. 8½ galls.
3rd gear .. 8.33 to 1	Oil cap. .. 8½ pints
4th gear .. 5.43 to 1	Water cap. 1½ galls.
Reverse .. 21.87 to 1	Tyres 5.00 x 16 Dunlop
Final drive Spiral bevel	

PERFORMANCE

Acceleration secs. secs.	Max. speed 67.6 m.p.h.
10-30 .. Top 11.8 3rd 7.1	Petrol consumption 30
20-40 .. Top 13.0 3rd 8.7	m.p.g. at average speed
0-60 .. All gears 34.6 sec.	of 45 m.p.h.
BRAKES 30-0 in 32 ft. (94 per cent. efficiency)	
RELIABLE CRUISING SPEED 58.2 m.p.h.	

GRANDSTAND

A Golf Commentary by
BERNARD DARWIN

THAT you cannot have it both ways is true of many things besides golf. Its particular application to golf is in regard to watching rather than playing. In many ways golf is the most uncomfortable and laborious of all games to watch. At the others we sit, if we are lucky, in a comfortable seat and the pageant of the match unrolls itself before our eyes. At Association Football it seems to be necessary to stand all night in a queue to get that seat, but that is "another story." Once seated, we can see everything there is to be seen, but—and here is what is vulgarly called the snag—we see it at a distance: some of the finer points, at any rate, are lost to us and we cannot always distinguish the players; all the fieldsmen at a cricket match look remarkably alike, especially since caps have given such immense peaks, very unlike the tiny caps of old days having, like the Grand Panjandrum, "the little round button at top."

A golf, on the other hand, if we really want to watch a match we have to walk a long way, we have to struggle with far too many of our fellow mortals fired with the same ambition, and even so we cannot see all we want; if we study the driving we shall hardly get a glimpse of the putting beyond "the 'oofs of the 'orses," unless we resort to the immoral and undignified practice of running. But there is this compensation: that what we do see, we see at close range. We can observe the lie of the ball and the player's stance and so better appreciate his difficulties and his skill. We can imagine that we see how he does it, with a view to pious imitation in the future. Sometimes we can even hear what the great man says, not, indeed, to us, for we ought not to bother him with our chatter, but to high heaven when something goes amiss. Crowds to-day are often so big that, as we get older and less mobile, we may wonder with Mr. Weller, senior, "whether it's worth goin' through so much to learn so little," but at least the chance is ours for the taking.

We can, of course, see a good deal of the general play, though not so intimately, by taking up our position at some advantageous spot such as the mound built among the whins at the far end of St. Andrews in the neighbourhood of the loop. That mound is a kind of rudimentary grandstand, and for some time past it has seemed that the time of a more elaborate one was coming. Now it appears to have come. I read the other day of a proposal to erect a grandstand for spectators on the Oakdale course at Harrogate where the North British-Harrogate professional tournament is to be played in July. Whether this plan will really be carried out I do not know, and, if it is, its success or failure must obviously depend on the site of the stand and on how much can be seen from it.

I have only once seen Oakdale and my memories of it, though pleasant, had grown rather dim. At first I could remember little beyond some pretty woods and a little stream running through the middle of the course, which formed a hazard at several holes. It had reminded me of a stream called the Skokie which pervades the Onwentsia course near Chicago and caught a number of my pitches there, now some five and thirty years ago. Luckily, however, I have lighted on an account of Oakdale which I wrote after going there, and find that my recollections of that ubiquitous stream, called the Oak Beck, were generally correct. There are, or were at the time of my visit, both tee shots, comparatively unalarming, and pitches, far more agitating, to be played across it, and I mentioned it at one hole as lying in wait in a sinister manner immediately behind the green. It is, I should imagine, clear that the grandstand, if there is one, must afford the maximum of watery excitement for the spectator.

I see that I described the short 9th as being decidedly terrifying, with the beck bang in front of the green and other troubles both at the sides and at the rear; but that hole is presumably rather too far from the base. However,

the beck played its part again at the home hole, where, I wrote, we must pitch over the beck, "often from a slightly hanging lie." That sounds to me good ghoulish fun. Hydrophobia is a disease which may affect the best of golfers when he is coming to the last hole with a good card in his pocket, and once upon a time, so I was told, a well-known Yorkshire professional pitched three balls running into the beck. As the first tee-shot is, or was, likewise over the water from a cheering high tee, there must be a good place for the stand in this neighbourhood, where the spectator can have plenty to see.

The nearer the last hole, the better for cumulative excitement. And as this Harrogate tournament is presumably by score play, all the players must play out the round and there can be no lame gaps. In a match-play competition it is otherwise; several successive matches may finish out in the country, and it is intensely irritating for the onlooker who has carefully teed himself up behind the 18th green to see the players shaking hands on the 17th. Unless it is in the windows of the club-house or such admirable balconies as there are at St. Anne's and St. Andrews, there is not, as a rule, any stand provided by Nature quite near home.

By far the most striking of these natural grandstands, as far as I know, is the top of the Maiden at Sandwich, for, apart from the green immediately below, we can see much of the play to the 5th and 7th, to say nothing of the incomparable view over Pegwell Bay, but it comes too early in the round for perfection; the matches are only just getting into their stride. Worplesdon, where watching need not be too strenuous,

is well endowed with places of vantage, the verandah at the 4th, the seats behind the 10th, and the grassy bank at the back of the 12th; but we must do a little walking at the end if we are to taste the poignant joys of the finish. The 10th, incidentally, has that hope of seeing somebody plunge into the water, in which Oakdale is so rich; but nobody ever goes into the pond nowadays and there is never a splash to hearten us. The old 16th at Stoke Poges, with tee-shot across the lake, was a capital place for watching for the same bloodthirsty reason and was, moreover, lazily near the club-house.

Take it for all in all, I think the back of the green at Mui field, once irreverently called the "Postage Stamp," affords the best and most varied watching I know. It has none of the conspicuous grandeur of the Maiden, but it is delightfully near the club if thirst or rain impels retreat, and there is such a lot to see apart from the hole itself. The match has by this time—it is the 13th—reached a critical stage, and there is, if I remember aright, reasonable sitting room. I look forward to some serene hours there at this year's Open Championship. I am very sure I shall find no grandstand and I am glad of it. However stationary I must needs become, the notion of climbing up stairs to my seat with a numbered ticket in my pocket does not appeal to me. Already we have to watch roped off from the course and I am bound to say that we do so better than we did in the midst of a swirling, rushing mob. But I am conservative enough to think that the "popularising" of golf has gone far enough and I draw the line at grandstands.

FARM-HORSE PSYCHOLOGY

By JOHN DIMSDALE

WHEN most people think about farm horses, the picture conjured up in their mind is either that of a small child leading a large horse which is pulling a load of hay, or that of a pair of horses ploughing. Considering the size and strength of a farm horse he is remarkably docile and puts up with a great deal; but sometimes there is another side to his character.

I have had several horses on my farm and by no means all of them have lived up to the generally expected quietness. There was Boxer, whose *bête noir* was an elevator. When he was stood at the bottom of one to unload his cartful of corn at harvest, his only aim in life was to get away from this hateful, rattling thing; unless immediate steps were taken to prevent his quick exit, half the load was scattered about the field again in next to no time. But there was one man who could give him complete confidence under these trying circumstances; he was the foreman—a man of seventy years with one leg longer than the other and quite incapable of speedy movement. He just leant against the horse's shoulder and Boxer never boded an inch. My heart was perpetually in my mouth, for, if he should move, the foreman could do nothing about it.

Nobby was slightly mad. He would suddenly start off at full gallop for home, shedding his load in every direction as he went, down the road and round the corners with the cart on one wheel, missing gateposts by a coat of paint, scattering children and hens, finally arriving, rather blown, in the farm-yard to wait peacefully for his ex-master. By the grace of God no one was ever hurt in any of these escapades. One day, while sitting at my desk doing the unspectacular side of farming, I heard the approaching whirlwind. When he had arrived safely in the yard, I took him back to my very irate shepherd and together we collected the hurdles that lined Nobby's route. Before we had piled them all back on to the cart he decided to go home again. As he started I grabbed his headrope and was dragged rapidly across the field with my feet occasionally touching the ground; away went the hurdles

again. This time I managed to stop him after a few hundred yards. This was his last gallop; I will draw a veil over the rest of his story.

Once I bought two young Suffolk Punches—Bertha and Ella—which had been advertised as being "surplus to requirements." They were a fine pair and after getting them home I could still find nothing wrong with them. Then one day the local hunt ran across my farm. Bertha and Ella immediately flew the fence surrounding their field in impeccable style and for a large part of the day took everything in their stride. All work on the farm ceased; everybody was rounded up to join in this new form of "the chase." After many weary hours across very sticky ploughland and round churned-up headlands, they were cornered, haltered and led home still full of beans. I half wondered if perhaps they might not have been caught sooner, only my men did not seem to mind the effort as much as I did. Perhaps it was more fun than carting off mangolds and pulling sugar-beet.

From that day forward no ordinary fence would keep the Punches in. They jumped so well that I rather wondered if "surplus to requirements" really meant "far too good at jumping." In the end we stopped their activities by putting them in a field surrounded by an electric fence. A year of this, added weight, loss of some of the first flush of youth, and luckily no more hunting in the vicinity seemed to quieten them down; but when we came to breaking them to harness this turned out to be the lull before the storm.

When Ella was first "put to" in a cart, after a little persuasion, she was induced to move; when she went forward the cart rattled a little. Ella went a bit faster, the cart rattled a little more; finally Ella was going at full gallop with the horsekeeper flying like a streamer beside her, till the rope broke. With the cart rattling in the wind behind her, she shot up the lane, passed the vicar's gate and rounded the corner, the cart swaying madly; we heard the clatter of her hoofs for a short time, then an awful crash and dead silence.

The foreman and I were galvanised into

life and raced up the lane; the horsekeeper, who had picked himself up, unhurt in body but badly damaged in pride, also ran (a thing that I have never seen him do before or since); and as he ran he addressed Ella in language that no gentleman should use to a lady. The foreman and I rounded the corner neck and neck both fearful of the gory mess that we might find. Ella had charged the gate into her beloved meadow and tried to jump it, but that wretched skeleton behind her had impeded her leap; she, the cart, and the gate finished up in a very muddled heap. When we had sorted things out she proved to be not much hurt and, by some miracle, neither was the cart or gate. That was her last jump; she is now a steady old matron.

Contrary to the general idea, the quietest horses that I have used were two Suffolk stallions. The horsekeeper always worked them himself and we took no chances with them. They were a grand sight laying into the collar, hauling a great cartload of dung across our heavy old fields. Their crests alone gave a tremendous impression of power.

One yearling Suffolk, called Belinda, had been running out most of the summer in a forty-

acre field. We wanted to move her and the hunter, Dopey, nearer home, as the winter was coming on and the grass was getting short. They decided that it would be fun not to be caught. We began operations with the foreman, the horsekeeper and myself, and ended with nine men. Eventually we had to drive them out of the field and then try to guide them back towards the farm buildings. They found, almost immediately, the one and only gap which we had not guarded, thinking that they would not see it. Once through our defences they made the best of a rare opportunity. Unfortunately our countryside is not well supplied with hedges, only ditches which did not deter an old hunter and an active young cart horse. To cut a long and weary story short, after a point of one-and-a-half miles we brought them to bay and persuaded them that it was time to give up such frivolities and come home. Never again will they have such a chance, for there was really nothing between them and London.

My horsekeeper once said of a man that "he slides off a stack worse than a horse." This was such a curious expression, and one which

I had never heard before, so I asked him what he meant and how it arose. When he was young, he told me, a great deal of the corn at harvest time was stacked in the large barns dotted about the farm; so as to pack them down tight and get more into them, a horse used to walk about loose on top. When the men knocked off work for the day the horse was left on the stack for the night; when the barn was nearly full the horse had to be persuaded to slide off; to begin with he did not like this at all and was apt to come down "all over the place." After a little practice he became quite adept at it and would come down when told by sitting on the edge of the stack, kick his hind legs forward from under him and slide down just like any small boy wearing out the seat of his trousers.

Like so much else that is picturesque on a farm, horses are fast making way for machinery. Before I took over my land, more than twelve teams of horses were kept; now we have only three and a youngster or two and, when spring-time comes, they will be gone. Then there will be no more amusing incidents or accidents; tractors' foibles are to me just downright exasperating.

CORRESPONDENCE

GOOSE-SHOES

SIR,—Is the custom (of a century or so back) of shoeing geese for road travel known to any of your readers?

An old saddler friend of mine, aged 85, tells me that his father told him that about a century ago flocks of geese used to be driven on foot from Devon to London in the late summer to be fattened on farms near the city for the Christmas market, and that, owing to the wear and tear on their feet caused by the rough road surface, it was customary to supply a form of boot or sandal at various points on the route.—E. F. RAWLINS, *The Square House, South Petherton, Somerset.*

[Further evidence that geese used to be fitted with definite shoes for travel over hard roads is contained in a misericord from Whalley Abbey, Lancashire, now in Whalley parish church, which depicts a smith shoeing a goose. At the turn of the century goose-shoes were nothing more than casings formed on the birds' feet by driving them through a pool of Stockholm tar and then over loose sand. Birds thus shod were seen in Lancashire as recently as 1918.—ED.]

AN ENIGMATIC EPITAPH
SIR,—The notice on the Plough Inn at East Hendred, Berkshire, illustrated in COUNTRY LIFE of February 27, has, somewhere in the country, a competitor in the shape of this epitaph to Elinor Bachelore, taken from the *Family Friend* for 1850:—



FIELDFARES AT AN APPLE DUMP DURING SEVERE WEATHER IN FEBRUARY

See letter: Scarcity of Fieldfares?

An EPITAPH on ELLINOR BACHELOR an old Pye Woman.
Bene A. Thin Thed Ustt HEMO. Uld yo
L.D.C. RUSTO! Fnel L.B.
Ach El Lor. Lat. ELY,
Wa.S. shove N.W. How-Ass! kill'd
I.N.T.H.
Eav T. Soff.I. Escu Star.
D. San D T Art. San D K. N E.
W.E
Ver-Yus. E-Of He ove N W. Hens He
'Dli V'DL. on geno
Ug H S hem A.D.E. he R. la Stp
Uf-fap
Uf. F B Y he. R hu
S. Ban D.M.
Uch pra is'D. No. Wheres Hedot
H.L. i.e. Tom. A head I.R.T.P. Yein
hop Esthathe
R. C. RUSTWI,
L L B. Era is 'D—!

The somewhat light treatment of so serious a subject is unusual in a family journal in the 13th year of the reign of Victoria the Good!—PATRICK BAGGALLAY, *Bennington, Herts.*

HUMANE DESTRUCTION OF RATS

SIR,—Surely both Major Jarvis (*A Countryman's Notes*) and your correspondent Mrs. Ramsbottom, of the U.F.A.W., are in error in assuming (February 27) that the more quickly a rat dies the less pain it feels. It is possible to measure the pain felt by a dying rat only by directly observing its behaviour. Rats killed by poisoning with Alpha-Naphthyl-Thipurea

rapidly become insensible to shock, their only reaction being to avoid darkness. They do not run about after the first few hours of taking the poison, and death ensues 36-48 hours after the taking of a lethal dose. No symptoms of pain are observed during this period. The importance of prebaiting cannot be over-estimated.—N. E. HICKIN, Ph.D., B.Sc., *Plummers, Bletchingley, near Redhill, Surrey.*

THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT

SIR,—To most people a cone is a cone—or it may be a fir cone, even if it has not come from a fir tree. The enclosed photograph shows that cones can differ, to say the least.

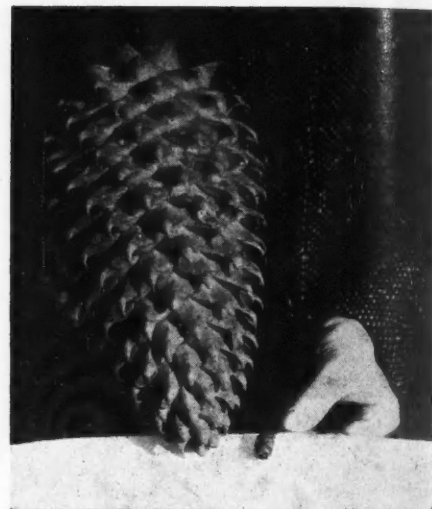
One cone is from *Pinus coulteri*, the big cone pine introduced by David Douglas from western North America, and the other is from *Tsuga canadensis*, the eastern hemlock of the same continent. Neither of these trees is economically important in Britain, but both may be found in arboreta.

The cones of *P. coulteri* are interesting not only for their size (this specimen was only 2 lb. 9 oz., but I believe some run to 4 lb.), but also for their fearsome armament of hawk-like spines. The seeds thus protected are eaten in North America. *Tsuga canadensis* is a very close and very poor relation of *Tsuga heterophylla*, the beautiful western hemlock which is being increasingly used in British forestry.—WOODMAN, *Berkshire.*

SCARCITY OF FIELDFARES?

SIR,—Apropos of Major Jarvis's recent remarks about the scarcity of fieldfares this season, during the wintry weather in late February, a flock of about 100 were constant visitors to a dump of rotting apples which had been deposited on an old quarry bank at Loose, Kent, and on the 22nd I took the enclosed photograph of some of them.

Although I did not see as many fieldfares as usual last winter, I saw small flocks in several parts of Kent, and feel that perhaps petrol restrictions, rather than the fieldfares themselves, are the reason for my not having seen more.—RONALD B. HAYNES, *Watermill House, Loose, Kent.*



A CONE OF THE BIG-CONE PINE (*Pinus coulteri*) AND (right) ONE OF THE EASTERN HEMLOCK (*Tsuga canadensis*)
See letter: The Long and Short of It

WHEN TOBACCO FARMS WERE BURNED DOWN

SIR,—With reference to Mr. Hurt's recent article on tobacco-growing in Britain, this industry at one period assumed such proportions at Winchcombe, Gloucestershire, that on several occasions troops were sent to destroy the tobacco plantations there. Special Acts were passed for taxing Gloucestershire tobacco as early as 1553, and a tax of 3d. a pound was increased to 6s. 10d. a pound by James I, after he had expressed his disapproval of tobacco and "the black stinking fume thereof" in *A Counterblaste Against Tobacco*.

Charles II's Parliament prohibited its cultivation and imposed a penalty of 40s. per rood for all who violated the Act. In 1658 troops were sent to the district to destroy the plantations, but the local Gloucestershire folk resisted them with such grim determination that they fled, or so we are told, with their task of destruction unaccomplished. In August, 1667, troops were again dispatched on the same errand, but with no better results. Samuel Pepys, too, records that the Life Guards were sent to Winchcombe "to spoil the tobacco there which the people do plant contrary to the law."

In 1692, however, the authorities seem to have been more successful in enforcing their legal power when they

found, and destroyed, nine plantations near Bristol.

That the local tobacco industry had become of considerable value is certain from the simple statement that "many got great estates thereby." Undoubtedly the growers were finding it an alternative source of wealth just at the time when the value of their Cotswold wool trade had sunk so low that Charles II had passed the notorious "burial in woollen" Act in an effort to revive it.

One cannot but sympathise with the Winchcombe point of view at having a flourishing local industry destroyed for no better reason than that it interfered with a trade from far-off Virginia, for the world was more spacious in those days!

Even to-day one may hear an echo of that once flourishing trade, for, arriving by road at Winchcombe from Cheltenham, one may find the land on

The cloth has been in my family since it was made, and shows signs of much wear.—**BLANCHE A. BISSETT** (Miss), 22, *Stirling Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham*.

FOR FALCONS OR BEES?

SIR,—Does any of your readers know the original use of the openings shown in the enclosed photograph? They are two of several in the south-west wall of the Rectory garden at Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire. In one place there are five quite close together. Some measure 21 ins. high by 18 ins. wide, others 18 ins. high by 12 ins. wide; all are about 2 ins. or 3 ins. in depth.

It has been suggested that they were used as falcons' sunning places. Is there a possibility that their use was ecclesiastical? The old rectory at Beaconsfield is close to the present Queen Anne house, and the old garden walls connect.—**M. JOAN PARRY**, *Wharneck House, Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire*.

[We do not think these niches have any ecclesiastical significance, though what they were used for is not easy to tell. It has been suggested that the somewhat similar niches in the south side of the terrace wall at Packwood House, Warwickshire, were for bee-hives, but the shallowness of the Beaconsfield ones seems to rule out the possibility that they were used for that purpose. They may conceivably have been mews for falcons, as it has been suggested the considerably larger niches in the garden wall at East Riddlesden Hall, Yorkshire, were, or they may have been used for nothing more than holding pots of seeds for germinating.—**ED.**]

SIGNALLING OF DANGER

SIR,—On Beacon Hill, near Richmond, Yorkshire, at a height of 1,047 feet above sea level, stands an unusual and historic relic, depicted in my photograph, of the days before wireless. It is an old fire beacon and consists of circular stone platforms with an iron cage on the summit. Inflammable material was placed in the receptacle and always kept dry and in readiness for sending out a signal in times of national danger.—**J. DENTON ROBINSON**, *Darlington, Durham*.

LINK WITH BEAR-BAITING?

SIR,—In our old overseer's accounts for September, 1737, I came across the following entry:—

Paid by a Strowler travelling

with a Cat Licence £2-0-0

Paid by the Show people 7/6

I think it may refer to a man travelling with a bear for the old sport of bear-baiting, but can trace no record of the sport being practised here. Perhaps some of your readers can help.

Rather before the 1914 war we



A GUILLOTINE LOCK GATE AND (right) A NICK BRIDGE ON THE STRATFORD-ON-AVON CANAL

See letter: On a Midland Canal



PROBLEM NICHES IN A WALL OF THE RECTORY GARDEN AT BEAONSFIELD

See letter: For Falcons or Bees?

MORE LIGHT—FASTER GROWTH

SIR,—I may be misunderstanding Mr. J. H. F. Stevenson, but his letter of February 27 about the effect on animals of manipulating the amount of light available to them brought me up with a jerk. That artificial alteration of the amount of "daylight" can bring adult silver foxes into prime coat nine weeks ahead of normal time is understandable; after all, seaside dwellers come into sun tan weeks or months (or years for that matter) ahead of town dwellers in this country. But, as I read him, Mr. Stevenson's claim is that similar manipulation of light has shortened the marten's gestation period by 35 to 50 per cent. If martens in Canada and U.S.A., why not cows and pigs in Britain?—but there is no need to enlarge upon the remarkable possibilities for breeds of domestic animals, and even for the human race.—**R. T. COOKE**, *Preston, Lancs.*

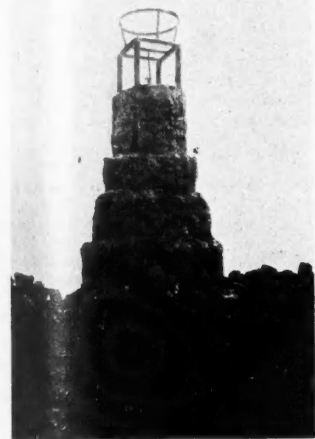
[Mr. Stevenson writes: I think Mr. R. T. Cooke's fears of a sudden rapid increase in the domestic animals he mentions—and in the human race—owing to a reduction in the gestation period can be set at rest. In my letter of February 27 I was careful not to use the expression "gestation period" as this tends to imply the period during which the foetus is developing within the female parent. In bats (*Animals as Friends*, by M. Shaw and J. Fisher, p. 18), deer (*Veterinary Obstetrics*, by W. L. Williams, p. 169), martens and sables (*U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Circular No. 107*, p. 5), and probably several other species (possibly our own badger?), there is a period after mating during which the fertilised ovum is dormant and does not develop at all. After this period, implantation takes place and the foetus develops in the more usual manner, culminating in the birth. I think it is obvious that, if one could shorten the "dormant" period by artificially producing the stimulus which brings on implantation, the total pre-birth period could be shortened.

The experiment which I quoted concerning martens was fully reported in *Science* (98, 2552, p. 10) by those who carried it out—**R. K. ENDERS** and **O. PEARSON**, in collaboration with the Fish and Wildlife Service of the U.S.A. From this experiment it would



A GUILLOTINE LOCK GATE AND (right) A NICK BRIDGE ON THE STRATFORD-ON-AVON CANAL

See letter: On a Midland Canal



AN OLD FIRE BEACON NEAR RICHMOND, YORKSHIRE

See letter: Signalling of Danger

the left casually alluded to as Tobacco Close. Even the sites of the old tobacco storage warehouses can still be pointed out.—**L. E. RICHARDSON** (Mrs.), 9, *Suffolk Square, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire*.

IN MEMORY OF MARLBOROUGH'S WAR

SIR,—With reference to your correspondence about a tablecloth or table napkin woven to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo, I possess a similar type of damask cloth woven to commemorate the campaign of the Duke of Marlborough in 1710. It is 7 ft. (from selvedge to selvedge) by 5 ft. 4 ins., and the pattern is 3 ft. deep.

The design consists of a border of coats of arms: top and bottom, the arms of England of the time of Queen Anne, and others; each side, coats of arms in pairs, between which are the names Lille, Meenen, and Tournay. These names are woven both the right and the wrong way round to form a symmetrical pattern.

Within the border is a design in three or four registers representing (1) The siege of a town with many towers and spires, with artillerymen firing live shells from mortars into the midst of it. (2) A line of gunners with artillery. (3) Horsemen on prancing horses, arranged in two pairs, the design being made up of the same figures reversed so that horses and riders face each other. (4) A representation of a small town or castle.

Between the registers are woven the date 1710, and the names Arien, Botvins and Douay.



OLD PEMBROKESHIRE FARM-HOUSES WITH ROUND CHIMNEYS

See letter: Round Chimneys in Pembrokeshire



appear that the alteration in the amount of "daylight" caused implantation to take place, and resulted, as I stated, in a considerable reduction in the time between mating and the birth of the young. In my opinion this is not so remarkable as the experiment with the silver foxes. I must confess that the similarity between the accelerated moult and regrowth of fur in a fox and the sun tan on a human being escapes me, unless Mr. Cooke is thinking of those magnificent hirsute growths which appeared upon many of our Navy (seaside dwellers?)



A FLEAM, A THREE-BLADED KNIFE USED FOR BLEEDING CATTLE AND HORSES

See letter: For Bleeding Stock

during the recent war. To expose a fox in full coat to strong sunlight causes the fur to turn brown, with a consequent considerable loss in value.—E.D.]

BEFORE THE BLOW-LAMP

SIR,—I enclose a photograph of a collection of painters' and other tools used before the invention of the blow-lamp, and now preserved at the Tickenhill Folk Museum, Bewdley, Worcestershire. Of the upright implements, that on the left is a pattern-maker's smoothing iron, used hot for going over the wooden moulds before casting to remove any irregularities. Then comes a salamander, also used hot, for removing old paint. This was held by a boy over the painted surface while a man with a knife scraped off the paint. Next is a brass-founder's tongs, for removing a pot of molten metal.

The hook-shaped implements (left) are plumber's irons, used by holding the heated blob-like ends against a lead joint when one was soldering. The other is a double-

ended bowl for pouring out molten metal.—ALLAN JOBSON, 21, Crown Dale, S.E.19.

THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR AT DERBY

SIR,—As the writer of the letter in your issue of February 20 about the Old Mayor's Parlour at Derby, may I say how much I deplore, with Mr. Falkner (March 12), the demolition of this ancient building. Its fate was sealed before the war in the face of fierce opposition, and after a reprieve during the war further opposition was unavailing.

Mr. Falkner says: "All the writer can say is that much panelling and flooring has been saved." Unfortunately that is all one can say.—F. R., Derby.

FOR BLEEDING STOCK

SIR,—I should be glad if you could tell me the original use of the knife with three blades of which I enclose a photograph.—O. TANNER (Miss), Redesdale Arms Hotel, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire.

[Our correspondent's photograph is of a fleam, an instrument used for bleeding cattle and horses when they were fleamy (clotted with blood). More animals died, however, from the cure than from the complaint. The fleam was also used for bleeding calves to make their flesh white, and apparently went out of use during the last century.—E.D.]

ROUND CHIMNEYS IN PEMBROKESHIRE

SIR,—The problem of why old cottage chimneys in Pembrokeshire are round seems insoluble. The theory that they are Flemish in origin, mentioned in your issue of February 20, seems unlikely inasmuch as round chimneys were more numerous in the northern or Welsh part of Pembrokeshire than in the south, where the Flemings were. The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments falls back on the conclusion that they were a local feature.

You may like to publish these photographs of two farm-houses in the

St. David's district of Pembrokeshire each of which has a round chimney. Croftufty, portrayed in my first photograph, was evacuated during the war, as it lay within an air station, and may not be occupied again. Rhosson, depicted in the other photograph, is in good preservation.—M. W., Hereford.

FULMARS' BEHAVIOUR WHEN DISTURBED

SIR,—I have often watched fulmars sitting on cliff ledges during the mating season and noted the fierce cackling with which they sometimes greet a bird attempting to alight on the same ledge. One fulmar which I was watching recently became so annoyed with another trying to land that it ejected a stream of amber-coloured fluid from its beak at it. The oily fluid missed its objective, but no further attempts were made to alight on that ledge.

This amber-coloured oil is often squirted at human intruders by fulmars sitting on eggs (I have had a few narrow escapes myself while photographing them), but I have never before seen it used by the birds against one of their own species.—G. MACLEOD, Navidale, Helmsdale, Sutherland.

[Fulmars will vomit this oily fluid when disturbed or frightened by anything, man or bird, but it seems to be ejected indiscriminately rather than at a definite objective.—E.D.]

A CYPRIOT CENTENARIAN

SIR,—The peasant and the olive trees portrayed in the enclosed photograph are reputed to be among the oldest living examples of their kind in Cyprus. The good lady claims to have reached the age of 105, and the trees in the background are said to have been planted over 800 years ago.—COLLINGWOOD INGRAM, Kyrenia, Cyprus.

FROM DEVON TO AUSTRALIA

SIR,—With reference to the letter in COUNTRY LIFE of October 3, 1947, about old cart-wheels, about 1853 a family named Hanns left their home in Devon, England, and sailed for Australia, taking with them cart-wheels similar in style to that from Yorkshire depicted in your correspondent's photograph.

Mr. and Mrs. Hanns, with a large family of sons and daughters, all well versed in English farm life, first took a farm on Kangaroo Island, South Australia, where no doubt the wheels they had taken with them did good service. Later, however, they rented a mill in Hindmarsh Valley. It was there that I saw one of the wheels, supported on flour barrels, used as a table, the axle hole being filled by a block of wood. It was in a four-roomed cottage kindly lent to my

father by Mr. Hanns, in, I think, February, 1859, after a disastrous bush fire had left us, and many other people, for the time homeless.—BEATRICE M. C. ROSS, 388, Seaview Road, Henley Beach, South Australia.

LETTERS IN BRIEF

Oil Beetles Abroad Early.—I was surprised to find over a dozen oil beetles (*Meloe proscarabaeus*) on cliff herbage between The Dancing Ledge and St. Alban's Head, Dorset, on March 14. All seemed enlivened by the afternoon sunshine.—KENNETH J. SMITH, Wychwood, Harbour View Close, Parkstone, Dorset.

View of Frozen Montmorency Falls.—Is not the picture of winter sports at Montmorency, Quebec, reproduced in your issue of January 9, a view of Montmorency falls from below?—A. M. BEALE, Rockcliffe Park, Ottawa, Canada.

[A writer in a recent issue of the *Montreal Gazette* confirms that the picture we illustrated depicts Mont-



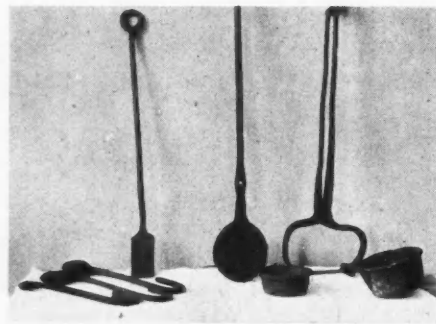
A CYPRIOT PEASANT OF 105 UNDER SOME OLIVE TREES EIGHT TIMES HER AGE

See letter: A Cypriot Centenarian

morency Falls under ice. Last February they froze over completely.—E.D.]

Carvings of the Caladrius.—Apropos of my letter (March 5) about carvings of the caladrius, the medieval bird gifted with the power of healing the sick, among the carvings of the porch of St. Margaret's Church in York is one which, I think, depicts the bird and a recumbent patient.—D. GWYTHER MOORE, Carr Villa, Carr Lane, York.

Rowing Relics.—An exhibition of relics of early rowing days is being arranged by the Henley Olympic Regatta Welcome Committee for the period of the Olympic Regatta in August. Anyone willing to lend exhibits is asked to communicate with Commander R. H. Glen, Manor Garden, Henley-on-Thames.



PAINTERS' AND OTHER OLD TOOLS PRESERVED AT THE TICKENHILL FOLK MUSEUM, BEWDLEY

See letter: Before the Blow-Lamp

JOSEPH CRAWHALL: ARTIST AND ECCENTRIC

By DENYS SUTTON

NOW that one is sufficiently far removed from the 19th century to see it in something like its proper perspective, its particular attraction and variety are evident. It was an age which, if it stressed convention and formality, was sufficiently elastic to permit a measure of eccentricity. Would that one could say the same of our own epoch, which tends towards regimentation! The eccentrics who fill across the Victorian and Edwardian scene are many; few are as fascinating and as sympathetic as those characters who cared to combine a love of art with a need for dissipation and travel. Though remaining exceedingly English in their outlook, they found difficulty in fitting into that round of country-house visits and social duties which were the accepted practice of the day. They preferred to seek a warmer climate than that of England and a less austere or disciplined form of life. They were constantly on the move; more often than not they were in trouble; they were sometimes remittance men. But whatever their faults, they revealed an infectious gusto for life which recalls the hearty living of the 18th century.

One of the most entertaining and gifted of these misfits was Joseph Crawhall. He appeals to us, not only because of the particular quality of his art, but also because of the mystery of his character, of the strange impenetrability that shrouds his life. "Creeps," as he was called, must have been a singularly disconcerting figure. The son of a Northumbrian squire, he embraced the life of an artist with delight, living in Paris and elsewhere. He was a curious character. In the portrait drawing of him by A. S. Hartrick, he seems almost sinister: his dark flashing eyes and roving expression give him the air of a poacher or a gypsy. He cared little for public opinion and went his own way.

"As he stood in the smoking-room of the Hotel Continental in Tangier, dressed in a faded red hunting-coat that had turned almost the colour of a mulberry through exposure to the weather and the fierce sun of Northern Africa, holding a velvet cap in one hand, and in the other his crop and a pair of weather-stained rein-worn dog-skin gloves, his face almost as weather-beaten as his gloves, few would have taken him for a great artist and a man of genius," wrote R. B. Cunningham Grahame in an arresting essay in *Writ in Sand*. Grahame's phrases are felicitous: Crawhall is immediately placed against his background, with its faint odour of stale cigar smoke. One sees him enter the lounge of the hotel, turn over the pages of a paper and drink several whisky-and-sodas that "had no effect upon him, except to seem to seal his lips more



1.—PORTRAIT STUDY. Indian ink and wash. One of the examples of the art of Joseph Crawhall on view at Messrs. Spink's Galleries in King Street, St. James's

firmly." Exactly why he went to Tangier does not transpire; he evidently felt at home there.

It is from his period at Tangier that date many of the drawings at present on view at Messrs. Spink's Galleries in King Street, St. James's. These drawings come from three sketchbooks he used when, in the late 1880s, he visited Paris and Tangier. They throw a welcome light on his art, its range and precision. The subjects themselves can be divided into several groups, mostly representing animals, camels, macaws, bears and swans. Other drawings, however, include studies of North African street scenes (Fig. 2) and of gulls over the Seine (Fig. 3). What is so striking about them is their freshness and directness. Crawhall could note the features of a macaw with extraordinary detail and, by cutting away inessential, convey an impression of the bird itself.

His artistic origins were various. He would seem to have begun in the tight linear tradition of Charles Keene, who was a friend of his father, but with time he progressed toward a greater freedom of expression. He worked with James Guthrie and the Glasgow school, but, at

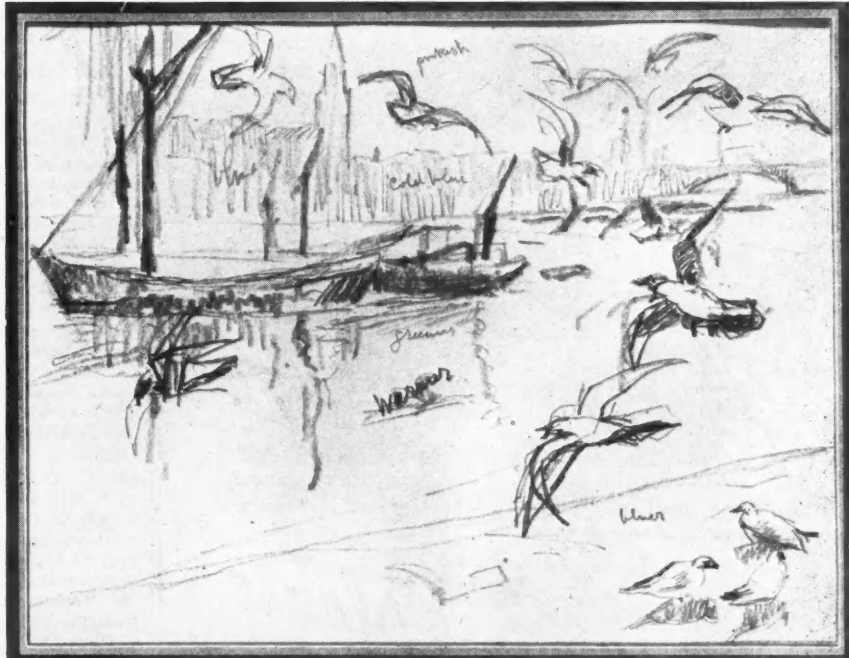
bottom, their style and approach were different from his own. The main influences that shaped him were Manet, whose manner is reflected in his portrait study (Fig. 1) and Far Eastern art: he inherited, then, some of the various styles which formed the origins of the Impressionist movement in France.

Unfortunately, little is known of his period in Paris, but he apparently worked for some time in the studio of Aimé Morot, a painter of horses and battle scenes. His studies were irregular and he seems to have spent many hours wandering about Les Halles; according to Hartrick he executed only one drawing while in Paris, a study of a bull. He was a frequent visitor to the Louvre, however, where his favourite work was Courbet's *A Man with a Leather Belt*.

Much of his time was spent out of doors, and he was a passionate horseman. In his art he relied on his memory; only rarely did he draw directly from Nature. On the contrary, he would wait for hours in some field watching a bird and then returning home would, like Daumier, execute his drawing. He might perhaps jot down a slight indication of his theme on the spot, a colour notation, but his main work was done away from the model.

He was an artist of fits and starts, spending long weeks in comparative idleness which would then be followed by intensive work. He liked, too, to vary his work with bouts of drinking, and would disappear for several days at a time. In some ways he resembled Toulouse-Lautrec, his great French contemporary, and would find relief in night life. He would eat not more than a sparrow, drink much whisky and when not asleep would draw with charcoal "pictures of horses, cows, goats and animals of every kind" on the walls of the houses in Tangier where he sought repose. Thus "Creeps" passed his days.

Our final impression of him as we look at his drawings and read of his life is one of bewilderment. In his era he was a genuine and original artist, working in an Impressionist technique which he combined with a keen sense of decorative design. "Whether he would have produced more if he had drunk less is a moot question," maintained Cunningham Grahame. It is just these sides of his character, with his relentless self-criticism, which help to make him so interesting. Let us hope that more details about his life will come to light. What his motives and secrets were might provide fascinating material for the biographer. "I too have been blind," he once told Grahame. What was the blindness and what occasioned the revelation that came to the strange silent "Creeps" as he drew and drank in Tangier?

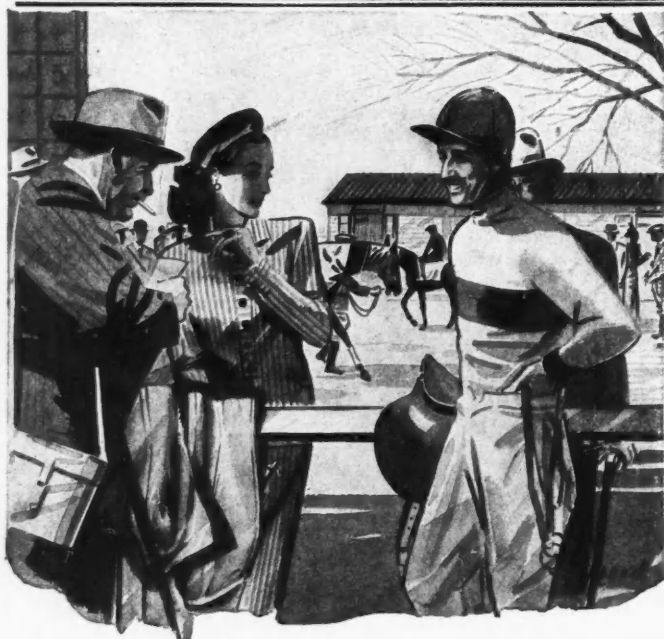


2.—NORTH AFRICAN STREET SCENE. Indian ink and wash. (Right) 3.—GULLS OVER THE SEINE. Crayon

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NEW BOOKS

MAN'S WILD ANIMAL FRIENDS

Reviews by HOWARD SPRING

IN *Wild Animals and the Land* (Crosby Lockwood, 10s. 6d.), Mr. F. Howard Lancum attempts "to assess the character of the wild animals found in this country and to place these animals in their rightful position vis-à-vis the man on the land." Lest it should be thought that this sounds like a cold scientific analysis, it must be said at once that Mr. Lancum is a naturalist of many years' standing, and that his knowledge of creatures and their ways is equalled by his love of them.

That is, generally speaking. There are some creatures for whom he has no love. Who could love a rat?—unless, perhaps, a schoolboy enamoured of the white, pink-eyed variety which, I must confess, enchanted many hours

upon him merely from the economic point of view, he says: "All the available evidence goes to show that it does a great deal more good than harm. Very occasionally it may take a fowl or an egg. Against these infrequent lapses we have a long record of useful work in the destruction of pests of many kinds. There is no case whatever for persecuting the badger."

However little he deserves it, poor Brock has endured "a war of aggression that dates from the beginning of recorded British history." Crimes not his own have been plentifully laid to his charge, and "that shoddy imitation of sport" called badger-digging still finds fools to indulge in it. Courage and fighting skill are high among the badger's virtues. He is not

WILD ANIMALS AND THE LAND. By F. Howard Lancum.
(Crosby Lockwood, 10s. 6d.)

A NORFOLK GALLERY. By R. W. Ketton-Cremer.
(Faber, 21s.)

MARINER DANCES. By P. H. Newby.
(Cape, 9s.)

of my own childhood. Nor are mice apt to get inside our hearts as skilfully as they get inside a cheese, though it is long since I have owned a piece of cheese big enough for one to get inside. But, of course, there are mice and mice. There is, for example, the shrew-mouse: a bad example at that, since Mr. Lancum tells me there is no such thing. A shrew is a shrew, it appears, and a mouse is a mouse. But Mr. Lancum shares my affection for these sharp-nosed, courageous creatures. I am glad to have his confirmation of their courage. "Small though they are," he says, "the shrews are pugnacious little creatures, and some of the battles between the males are very ferocious affairs." *Furius minimus*, a friend of the author suggested, would be a good name for the shrew.

THE COURAGEOUS SHREW

I first observed the courage of the shrews some years ago when my garden had a plague of them and of the common mouse, and I invite Mr. Lancum, who tells several "believe it or not" stories, to accept this one in the same spirit. My cats, one or other never without kittens, would catch mice and shrews and bring them to a spot outside the house. There they would drop them and give the kittens their earliest hunting lessons. The mice so brought were always abject. Either they would sit cowering or they would make little runs for cover. The shrews did neither. They would stand their ground, undaunted. They would sit up on their haunches looking like pigmy boxers, ready either to push with their little forefeet or to snap with their tiny jaws. I saw this again and again, and I am glad, therefore, to read in Mr. Lancum's book that the shrew is wholly beneficial and that "no man whose living is derived from the land should kill or harm a shrew if he can help it."

Of all British mammals the badger is Mr. Lancum's first love. Looking

an aggressor; he asks nothing better than to be allowed to amble about in his own enquiring fashion; but, if attacked, he never surrenders. He has been known, when attacked by six dogs, to escape, leaving behind him two dogs maimed and four willing to call it a day. "No terrier that was ever whelped," says Mr. Lancum, "no matter how high its courage, could kill a healthy adult badger single-handed, nor, in my opinion, could any dog of any other breed."

OTTERS ARE BRAINY

The otter, "fast as a flash, elusive as a sunbeam, slippery as an eel," is, Mr. Lancum thinks, "the brainiest of all our wild animals." The game fisherman tends to dislike the otter, but here again there is another side to the question. He eats "old cannibal trout," better dead than alive, but in the main, Mr. Lancum thinks, he eats more eels than other fish. "This fact should count to the otter for righteousness, at least in the eyes of the game fisherman, since eels are among the most prominent destroyers of the ova of young salmon and trout."

The toad is another stout and steadfast friend of man which has suffered much from ignorance, prejudice and superstition. "If it would eat slugs, the common toad would be the perfect gardener's friend; it is very nearly that already." I have kept toads in greenhouses for years, and endorse all that Mr. Lancum has to say about them. They are not only useful, but also most friendly and amusing creatures to have about the place.

Altogether, it is good to learn from this book that there are few creatures without some good in them and many in whom the good preponderates. The "callous imbecility" with which many of them are treated, especially by country people who should know better, is enough to make one weep.

Mr. R. W. Ketton-Cremer, who has written much on Norfolk men and matters, again places us in his debt with *A Norfolk Gallery* (Faber, 21s.). Half the book is concerned with events of the Civil War. Those were harsh times. "The sufferings they inflicted were great: and the most frequent sufferers were, as always, the decent and harmless people involved in a conflict of loyalties—the clergyman who had carried out the behests of his Archbishop, the squire who may have disliked prelacy, but who could not uphold the Parliament against his King."

HARD TIMES

It was a difficult time for men who wanted to walk in the middle of the road and the admirable account of the life of Bishop Hall, who was translated to Norwich when the troubles were at a bitter point, serves to illustrate this.

Mr. Ketton-Cremer gives us a glimpse of the more robustious partisan mind of the times in his chapter on Sir Harmon L'Estrange and his sons, King's men who were willing, not always wisely, to put things to the touch. The life lived throughout those troubled days by country parsons, caught in the clash between Puritanism and the Church as intended by Laud, is examined; and we have an account of the King's journey, when all was drawing to its fatal end, to Norfolk, whence he set out to join the Scottish army that handed him over to his enemies.

Mr. Ketton-Cremer is the author of a life of Horace Walpole, and it is not surprising to find him attracted by the career of Walpole's nephew, the Third Earl of Orford. He was one of those young men born to dissipate what others have accumulated. He was out for any expense or eccentricity, such as driving four red deer in a phaeton; and poor Horace, during one of his nephew's periods of insanity, had to go down to Norfolk to deal with "a crew of banditti," as he plaintively wrote, and found himself engaged in what must have been to him the incredible business of "selling sheep, bullocks, Shetland horses and all kind of stock."

FAITHFUL TO A SERVANT GIRL

The only engaging feature of this young man's life was his faithfulness to Patty Turk, a servant girl of great beauty whom he took into his keeping when they were both quite young. She remained with him all through his life, and his death followed her's by a few weeks. Even Horace Walpole was not ill-disposed towards her, and he had little reason to like much where his nephew was concerned. The nephew bequeathed the Norfolk estates to Horace, who thus became, as he said, "the poorest Earl in England." He inherited the bottle when the wine had gone down the sink.

A more engaging character is Robert Marsham, who wrote to Gilbert White: "My good friend, when you touch upon trees, you touch my mad string." He was a great tree planter. He lived to be ninety, and was one of the few men who have planted an acorn and stood beneath the oak's branches in maturity. He even washed some of his trees, using first a stiff sponge-brush and water and then a coarse flannel. The only over-topper of this exploit that I know is a Derbyshire farmeress with whom I used once to stay. Her spring-cleaning included the outside of the farm-house. She would prop a ladder against the wall

and with hot water, a scrubbing brush and soap attack each individual brick. However, Marsham's object was not cleanliness. He claimed that washing trees made them grow twice as quickly as if they were not washed!

LOVE FOR A CRIPPLE

Mr. P. H. Newby's new novel, *Mariner Dances* (Cape, 9s.), is essentially the story of Fred Paul's love for his crippled sister. When a boy, Fred, now a schoolmaster, had pointed a gun at Gladys, thinking it empty. Now she is doomed to drag a leg in irons through life. This is the outstanding fact in Fred's life. He judges everything from the point of view of how it will affect Gladys.

Mariner, a preposterous and beautifully presented character, appears at Fred's lodgings with a girl whom he has abducted, not telling her that he is already married. The pair eventually impose themselves upon Fred's family, who have a small-holding in the country. What we have to consider is not so much Mariner and his girl as the effect they have on the stability of Gladys's mind and consequently upon the delicate relationship that exists between Fred and Gladys. Fred thinks himself in love with Mariner's girl, Mary, and when she, discovering Mariner to be married, runs away to London, taking Gladys with her, Fred is mistaken in his belief that his pursuit of the pair is in order to get Mary back. He wants to get his sister back, and does. It is a subtle and finely written book, full of living human beings.

A PILOT GOES FISHING

IT would seem that those who fish but do not make use of an aeroplane either for the purpose of reaching river or loch quickly or for use over and about a fishery miss much; for Terence Horsley, to judge by his new book, *Fishing and Flying* (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 12s. 6d.) derives much benefit from the use of aerial transport. He can leave London by air and within a few hours be putting up his rod for an assault on the salmon or sea-trout of a river in Scotland, some overgrown but delectable stream in the West Country, or the burn where he tried to raise the average weight of the brown trout. From his vantage point in the sky he is very observant of the land and more particularly the rivers, noting salmon lies and likely pools wherein he may throw fly or bait and prove the value of his circumspection. But this book is mostly concerned with fishing; the flying is only the means to that end. Descriptions of scenery, adventures by the river or on the loch, meetings with individuals, strange or ordinary, and the incidents which are involved in the capture of fish are all well recounted. This is a book to be recommended to the fisherman who finds pleasure not only in fish but in the surroundings of the river wherein he fishes. Mr. Tunncliffe's illustrations make more vivid the reactions of the author, and combine with his writing to make a very delightful book.

A much enlarged edition of that good book, *Flying Salmon*, by G. P. R. Balfour-Kinnear (A. and C. Black, 15s.) is very welcome.

ROY BEDDINGTON.

Details of how the National Insurance Act is designed to work, and of its obligations and benefits, an enlarged municipal directory and a fuller educational section are notable features of the 1948 *Whitaker's Almanack* (Whitaker, 12s. 6d.), which also contains, among many other established features, a review of parliamentary personalities and proceedings and the usual survey of events in the arts, science and sport during the past year.

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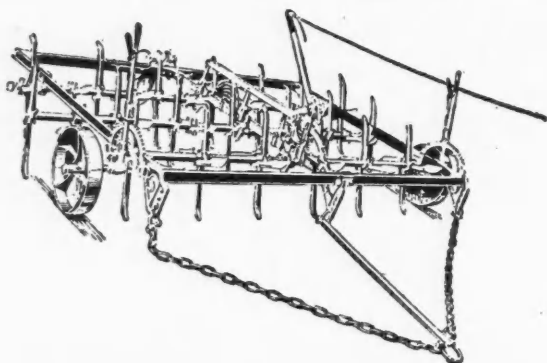
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FARMING NOTES

SPRING CORN WELL SOWN

THERE can rarely have been a year when the spring sowing was carried out under better conditions. The land has worked wonderfully well and perfect seed beds have been obtained with a minimum of effort. For this we have to thank both a dry autumn and a dry February and March, and it is difficult to say which contributed the more. Certainly a much greater acreage of land than usual was ploughed during September, October and November while it was still comparatively dry—and nobody who has had anything to do with the cultivation of heavy land will under-rate the importance of ploughing early before the land becomes sodden. But the gradual drying of the land which began early in February has been ideal as well and in marked contrast to what happened last year, when the transition from flood to drought took place almost overnight. The state of affairs that ensues when a very wet period is suddenly followed by drying winds and a hot sun is very difficult to compete with. The surface of the land gets drier and drier and harder and harder each day while it is still little better than mud inside. Conditions this year have been just the reverse and in consequence a larger area of spring corn must have been well sown with less effort than for many years. If "well sown" really is "half grown," as the old adage has it, then we may congratulate ourselves that the game is going very much in our favour.

To Graze or Not To Graze?

I OFTEN think that the most important function of the farmer is to decide between the conflicting claims of the various departments of the farm. Quite often the interests of one department have to be sacrificed for the good of another. A case in point in which I shall soon be called upon to give a decision concerns an 18-acre ley now in its second year. It has not been grazed since last September and is at the moment carrying a very nice bite of early grass and would provide a perfect home for my ewes and lambs. That is one possibility. But it is a field upon which I know that my cowman has his eye, and I am not surprised, for it is not far from the homestead and there is no doubt that if the cows were allowed an hour a day on it it would make a considerable difference to the milk yield. That is another possibility. There is a third—to leave the field ungrazed until later and, from the point of view of good grassland management, I am quite sure that this would be the right course to adopt. Not that I have the slightest intention of adopting it, even though I know quite well that the field will probably grow more and better grass ultimately if I leave it ungrazed now. It was grazed early last year and to continue to graze a field early year after year depresses the best grasses which, as it happens, are also the earliest. Moreover, the close grazing that this field received all last summer encouraged the clover at the expense of the grass. It already has too much clover and by grazing it closely again now I should only make bad worse. Nevertheless, graze it I shall, for a hundredweight of grass now is worth more than a ton later. I fancy a lot of stock will be turned out early this year, not simply because the season is an early one, but because the meagre supplies of fodder resulting from last year's drought are exhausted. If the summer is a reasonably moist one, no great harm will be done, but, if it proves to be dry, the ill effects of the early over-grazing will be seen right through the season.

Horse-breeding Prospects

I SUPPOSE I must be one of the few remaining farmers who still continue to breed a foal or two each year, and I confess that I should feel lost without them. It is perhaps true that the prospect for horse-breeding is not particularly bright; it is certainly true that most farmers seem to think so and have given up breeding in consequence. The result may well be that those few of us who still continue may ultimately reap a handsome reward. I have been breeding horses row for many years, and, taking one year with another, bad times and good, my horse-breeding operations have proved profitable. Of course, all my brood mares have to earn their keep by working on the farm; in fact it is only when they are actually suckling their foals that they are excused. I insist that the in-foal mares shall work right up to the day that they foal. I am sure that fat is the greatest menace to brood mares and is responsible for the death of more mares and foals than any other cause. There is no doubt that many mares are killed by kindness. My first foal this year was born at the end of February and another one a few days later. This raises something of a problem, for, while there is no doubt that a mating that takes place the first time that a mare comes into use after foaling (generally about the ninth day) is more likely to prove effective than one at any other time, the resulting foal will be born three weeks earlier the following year, and, though I prefer early foals to late ones, yet it is possible to have them too early. Very early foals mean a long period when the mare and her foal must be boxed before the weather is such that they can be turned out to grass, and this involves expensive feeding, a good deal of labour and increased risk. On the whole I think the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and both these mares were served on the ninth day. But, clearly, I cannot repeat it next year for, with farm-horses at least, January is too early for foals.

Milk Yield per Cow

THERE seems to be a good deal of confusion of thought on the subject of herd average and profit per cow and, when all is said and done, it is the profit per cow that matters. This is the really important figure—far more important to the farmer than his herd average. It is, of course, generally assumed that the terms are synonymous and that a high average milk yield automatically means a correspondingly high profit per cow. No doubt, this is true on most farms but not on all, for the highest averages are obtained in these days only at abnormally high costs. There is plenty of evidence that the profit per cow steadily rises as the average milk yield of the herd rises up to about the 800-gallon mark. Beyond this point the increase in the profit per cow does not appear to rise at anything like the same rate and when the 900-gallon level is passed it seems to cease. This can be accounted for by the fact that most herds that average over 900 gallons are herds that are milked three times a day—with all the additional expense that this involves—and of necessity a much greater proportion of the food of these high-yielding cows must be concentrates. When labour was cheap and cake and corn were cheap and plentiful too, it is probable that the profit per cow was highest in the highest yielding herds. It seems probable that it is not so to-day.

XENOPHON

THE ESTATE MARKET

THE FUTURE OF BROWNS

AS a result of discussions now being held, Browns Hotel, Dover Street, W., may change hands. Trust Houses Ltd. are negotiating to buy the hotel from J. J. Ford and Sons, the present owners, a subsidiary of Suvretta, Ltd., proprietors of Suvretta House, St. Moritz. It was in the year 1820 that James Brown, who had been butler to a peer, founded the hotel, which was intended to cater for the nobility and to have the same gracious atmosphere as the town house over which Brown had presided as butler.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

THE visitors book at Browns has been signed by many famous people: Napoleon III and the Empress Eugénie stayed at the hotel after the Emperor had been deposed and imprisoned following the battle of Sedan in 1870; Don Carlos, grandson of the first of the Carlist claimants to the Spanish throne, and himself a pretender to it, was tracked to Browns by spies, but escaped with the help of the management; President Theodore Roosevelt was married from the hotel in 1886, and a facsimile copy of the certificate of his marriage to Edith Kermit Carow is to be seen there. More recently, the late King George of Greece made Browns his London headquarters during the eleven years of his exile. Rudyard Kipling was a frequent visitor, and much of his writing was done there.

NIAGARA'S LEAD IN ELECTRICITY

A BRASS plaque which is fixed inside Room 104, reads as follows:—

The International Niagara Commission composed of Lord Kelvin, Chairman, England; Professor E. Mascart, France; Doctor Coleman Sellers, U.S.A.; Lieut.-Col. Theo. Turrettini, Switzerland; Professor W. Cawthorne Unwin, Secretary, England, was organised in this room, June 21, 1890, by the Cataract Construction Company, Edward Dean Adams, President 1890-1910.

This Commission publicly announced its opinion in favour of the adoption of electrical methods as the chief means of distributing Niagara power. The inauguration of the alternating current system of Niagara was followed by its adoption throughout the world.

BATH HOUSE TO BE OFFICES

BATH HOUSE, last of the great private mansions in Piccadilly, has been sold to a syndicate which has let it to the Distillers Company for use as offices. Built in 1821, by Alexander Baring, first Lord Ashburton, Bath House stands on the western corner of Bolton Street, on the site of the old Pulteney Hotel, formerly the private house of William Pulteney, first Earl of Bath.

William Pulteney, before his elevation to the peerage, had been a stout political opponent of Sir Robert Walpole who was fond of relating the following story about his adversary: "Lord Bath once owed a tradesman eight hundred pounds, and would never pay him. The man determined to persecute him till he did; and one morning followed him to Lord Winchelsea's, and sent up word that he wanted to speak with him. Lord Bath came down, and said, 'Fellow, what do you want with me?' 'My money,' said the man, as loud as ever he could bawl, before all the servants. He bade him come next morning, and then would not see him. The next Sunday the man followed him to church, and got into the next pew; he leaned over,

and said, 'My money; give me my money.' My Lord went to the end of the pew; the man too—'Give me my money.' The sermon was on avarice, and the text, 'Cursed are they that heap up riches.' The man groaned out, 'O Lord!' and pointed to my Lord Bath; in short, he persisted so much, and drew the eyes of all the congregation, that my Lord Bath went out and paid him directly."

SHEDDING THE LOAD

THE crippling effect of present-day death duties on landed property was commented on last week. In recent years many a property-owner has tried to find a way of shedding the load, and the effect of the recent increases in this form of taxation will be to act as a further stimulus. A popular method is the formation of a limited estate company, with the owner as chief shareholder; but this is not favourable in the case of purely agricultural estates, since the shares, being personal estate, are chargeable to the general scale which is much greater than the agricultural scale. Another method is the handing-over of property to a successor as a gift, and it was recently announced that Lord Harlech had almost completed the transfer of his estates to his elder son, Major the Hon. David Ormsby-Gore.

LIFE ASSURANCE

A THIRD method employed with the object of alleviating the burden of death duties is the creation of a liquid fund, payable at death, by means of a life assurance policy. Assuming that the policy is payable to the assured's executors, it would, in the normal course of events, increase the monetary value of the estate and, by bringing it into a higher category for death duties, to a great extent defeat its own object. There is, however, a type of policy that can be segregated for death duties. Such a policy, by virtue of its segregation, does not increase the value of the estate.

ANNUAL YIELD OF £4,919

THE Crawford Estate, comprising 223 houses, 6 shops, and various parcels of land in the centre of Maidenhead, Berkshire, has been sold privately by Messrs. Giddy and Giddy, of Maidenhead, on behalf of the executors of the late Major J. E. Pearce. The property has an annual yield of £4,919.

PLANNING ACT PUZZLES

MANY responsible representatives of the leading firms of estate agents, as well as many barristers, solicitors and other professional advisers, readily admit that they do not as yet comprehend the full import of the Town and Country Planning Act in all its ramifications. However, two booklets have been published recently that at least clarify the main issues.

Introducing the Town and Country Planning Act (The Law Society, 2s. 9d.) is written by Desmond Heap, comptroller and solicitor to the Corporation of the City of London, who has succeeded, within the space of 46 pages, in putting into plain language the outstanding features of the Act. *Question and Answer on the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947* (The National Federation of Property Owners, St. Stephen's House, Westminster, S.W.1, 1s. 2d. post free) asks 43 pertinent questions and gives the answers. The questions have been carefully chosen, and this booklet should be of value to all property-owners, be they great or small.

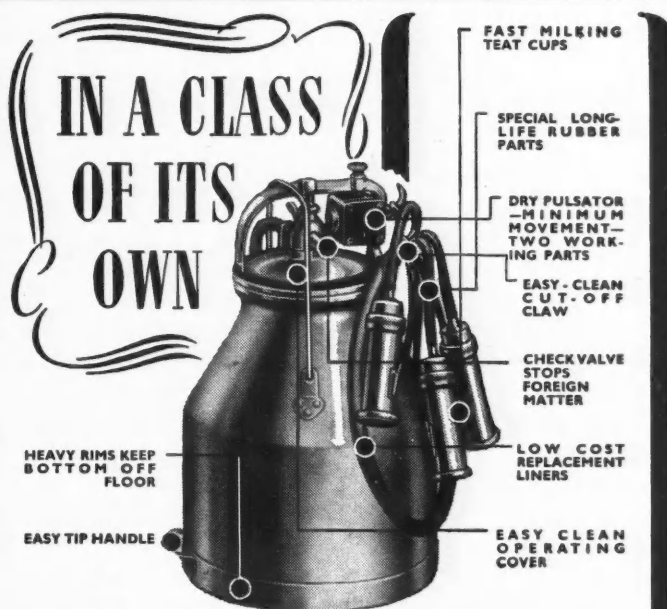
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The Picture Frock

EVENING styles are picturesque and the dresses with their flounces and curves show an opulence that recalls the Victorians and Edwardians. Crinolines, bustles, looped skirts, ballet skirts, two-tiered lampshade skirts, Watteau panniers, as well as slim skirts with tightly swathed Cleopatra draperies, all make their appearance in the summer collections. Necklines are high and plain, or very low. The halter décolletage has reappeared on full-skirted brocade dresses. Fichu effects carry out the Victorian theme in crisp embroidered muslins, organdies and rustling taffetas with full skirts that are worn over flounced petticoats and often panniers as well. Similar picture frocks are shown for garden parties, dresses in the real romantic tradition, with full skirts just short enough to show the ankles and low fichu tops. These dresses go with flower-trimmed bonnets tying under the chin or large shallow-crowned straws and leghorns laden with flowers and tying under the chin. Sometimes the



Photographs COUNTRY LIFE Studio

The picture frock in rich black broché taffeta with real lace yoke and balloon sleeves. Angele Delanghe



The fringe and dog collar have been revived for the summer fashions. Raymond

wide brims are flat and straight, sometimes fluted.

The tiny waist is emphasised on all the frocks by tight bodices, often boned, above and full skirts below, sometimes aided by restrained editions of the contraptions of bygone days, contraptions that women have always declared they would never wear again. However, the dresses are not nearly as extreme as their prototypes and are often modified considerably again after they are shown and when they are ordered. Padding is restrained and comfortable to wear, but, even so, the dresses are radically different from anything we have seen before. Counters in the stores where they are selling the petticoats, linen panniers, the bustle pads and the tiny corsets are thronged with buyers. So many people are trying them out. But the simple, straight clothes are being shown as well, and many of the designers achieve the full hips by an amplitude of gathers or unpressed pleats or by deep inverted pleats grouped in layers so that the deep top ones open to show two or even three smaller pleats below. This is for the slim

and the long-legged; sun-ray pleats are advised for those whose figure is not so easy.

The materials shown for evening are very pretty indeed and fall into three main groups. There are rich rustling silks—the broché satins, the moirés and the taffetas, the brocades and the poults—which the designers have utilised for the glamorous picture gowns which are shown in all the big collections, mostly in pale opalescent colours or in ivory. The same stiff, magnificent silks are also shown for the full-skirted evening coats which are of mediæval magnificence. These have been designed mostly for export, but have been ordered also by very smart women in this country. They are as dramatic as the dresses they are worn over, in brilliant exotic shades such as lime, Nattier blue or violet. The other type of evening wrap for the picture dresses is short or waist-length, or comes to a little below the waist. There are also fitted jackets in mink or ermine or short dolman capes into which the arms can be tucked. Capes, pelerine and boleros are also shown in fox and

(Continued on page 698)



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in brocade, while a few shawls are also making an appearance.

The second group of materials includes *ingenue* embroidered white muslins and the silk crêpes printed with tiny stars of formal little bouquets of flowers. They make a charming group of young girls' dresses with full ballet skirts and milkmaid's tops or with a fichu or a draw-string. Taffeta is also a widely used fabric for this style, as it is, perhaps of all fabrics, most suited for the crisp outlines of the new fashions. Frederick Starke has designed one of the prettiest of these dresses for young girls in a brighter-than-navy blue, the short, full skirt with a deep flounce, the top with a navy bolero over a strapless bodice in white embroidered Swiss muslin threaded at the top with navy ribbon. Koupy show* a charming light crêpe printed with multi-coloured flower bouquets. This has a square neckline and is worn over a crêpe-de-Chine petticoat with stitched stiffened hemline, and the skirt is wide and gored. Taffeta is featured universally in a bright navy and in bronze, not only for young girls' frocks of this kind, but also for more sophisticated looking dresses where the skirt is slightly longer but still short enough to show the ankle. The prettiest of these skirts are gored in many sections to the neatest of waists and worn over a flounced petticoat.

THE draped frocks require a completely different kind of material, as pliant in texture as possible, and some exquisite jerseys and fine crêpes, both French and English, make elegant draped ankle-length frocks, many of them in pale colours. There are also frocks with accordion-pleated skirts in these soft fabrics, wide as a Nautch girl's and attached to a very simple bodice, cross-over or halter, often short enough to show the ankles.

The mannequins showing these romantic evening dresses adopted equally picturesque styles of hair dressing. With the Victorian dresses they draw the hair back smoothly from



The short dance, or cocktail, frock in sapphire blue moiré with a low décolleté and a full skirt. Angele Delanghe. The large black leghorn from Simone Mirman

the forehead and pin huge loops of hair on at the back or make a knot low in the nape of the neck. Others swept the hair up leaving the ears bare and then allowed the hair to fall in loose curls on to the neck in the manner of a Charlotte M. Yonge heroine, some with a fringe. But the latest of all hair styles is radically different, with the hair pulled forward over the ears right on to the cheeks in a manner reminiscent of the cloche hat period. A coiffure where the hair is curled into a fringe in front, left flat along the top of the head and brushed up at the back with more curls in line with the front is worn with the looped pannier dresses; a smooth fringe, curled under in front with a knot at the back is worn with the story-book ankle-length dresses in check taffeta or cotton on sprigged silk. These fringes are necessary with many of the new straws that have small brims which curve down each side and are then filled in with the fringe.

Make-up is tending to move to the milk and roses English tints. "Desert Pink" is the name of the lipstick designed by Elizabeth Arden for blondes to wear this summer, and it gives the new delicate look. "Red Cactus," a gorgeous blue-red, is good for brunettes: it is keyed to the many greys and heightens the natural tints. Richard Hudnut has concocted a lipstick called "French Rose," a lovely warm pink with a touch of blue, essentially for blondes and a shade for this summer of muslin petticoats and tuckers, fringes and boaters and flower-trimmed Dolly Varden straws worn with picture-book cottons.

Goya's giant lipstick case has a gilt collar, which turns to adjust the lipstick, and the latest colour, Goya pink, is perfect to wear with grey, black or navy. The lightest possible powder bases are being made, and also specially fine face powder to help achieve the more natural effect that is so sought after this spring. For this purpose brown-black mascara has just been produced; it is ideal for blondes who like wearing dark mascara but find black too hard.

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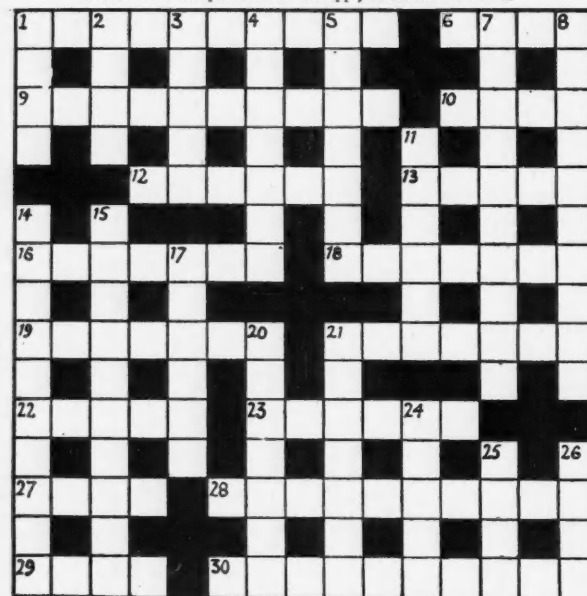
Fishing is not every man's folly: it is some folk's wisdom. And good fishermen are usually good smokers who are sufficient unto themselves providing pouch or case is well filled with *Balkan Sobranie*. That float may never bob, there may be never a suggestion of a rise, yet the angler who smokes *Balkan Sobranie* has had a good day; he is that modern rarity—a man at peace.

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Two guineas will be awarded for the first correct solution opened. Solutions (in a closed envelope) must reach "Crossword No. 947, COUNTRY LIFE, 2-10, Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C.2," not later than the first post on the morning of Thursday, April 8, 1948.

NOTE.—This Competition does not apply to the United States.



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SOLUTION TO No. 946. The winner of this Crossword, the clues of which appeared in the issue of March 26, will be announced next week.

ACROSS.—1, Hairdressers; 8, Mango; 9, Tremulous; 11, Submarines; 12, Stud; 14, Augurs; 15, Highbrow; 17, Dressing; 19, Askari; 22, Raid; 23, Saddleback; 25, Barricade; 26, Trier; 27, Impertinence. **DOWN.**—1, Handbag; 2, Idolatress; 3, Detail; 4, Exegesis; 5, Soul; 6, Rooster; 7, Smash and grab; 10, Side whiskers; 13, Chesterton; 16, Inhalant; 18, Epigram; 20, Avarice; 21, Adjoin; 24, Pine.

ACROSS

1. "Loveliest of trees, the cherry now . . .
"Wearing white for —" —A. E. Housman (10)
6. He was a maker of 22 and 23 (4)
9. Duccio and Giotto are so called among Italian painters (10)
10. Misfortunes (4)
- 12 and 13. Like one aspect of the river bank (11)
16. The glory is departed (7)
18. Unreceptive to the speaker (4, 3)
19. Apply grease (7)
21. Has this animal lost its scent, too? (7)
- 22 and 23. Elegiacs, perhaps (5, 6)
27. One kind of crop (4)
28. Rejected suitor, for instance (10)
29. "But westward, look, the — is bright"
—A. H. Clough (4)
30. Fragrant couch (3, 2, 5)

DOWN

1. Sight (4)
2. Not a corpulent general (4)
3. It could be cited in a different form (5)
4. dog is often relieved of this extremity (7)
5. Held me in dread (at night, it would seem) (7)
7. These were not conscripted (10)
8. Tree is dead (anagr.) (10)
11. In *saecula saeculorum* (6)
14. Fiendish (10)
15. The signalman's fantasy? (5, 5)
17. Little sea-fish (6)
20. Favourite theme of Elizabethan dramatists (7)
21. Painter of our mill (7)
24. Regal composition for a composer (5)
25. Sacred bird (4)
26. In short, a queen (4)

The winner of Crossword No. 945 is

Lady Fermor,

24, Durdham Park,

Bristol 6

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